

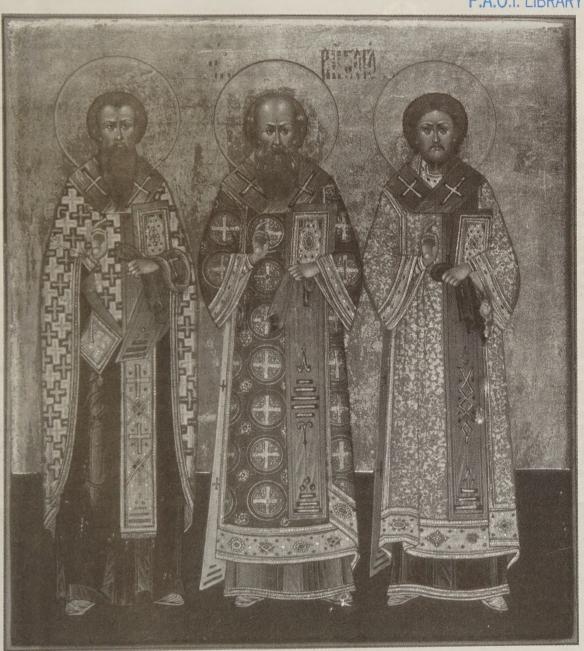
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THE THREE HOLY HIERARCHS STS. BASIL, GREGORY & JOHN

Commemorated January 30



Most Rev. Archbishop

Nathaniel Popp

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The parish family The Presentation of Our Lord Orthodox Church

Fairlawn, Ohio

invites you to its

90TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Saturday, January 31

4:30 p.m. Welcome of the Hierarch Parastas and Great Vespers

5:30 p.m. Reception for Hierarch and Guests

Sunday, February 1

9:30 a.m. Entrance and Vesting of the Hierarch Hierarchal Divine Liturgy

12:30 p.m. Anniversary Banquet

Seating at the Anniversary Banquet by advance reservation only, payment received by Sunday, January 25. Call the parish office (330-666-8054) for arrangements.

You are Invited!

90TH ANNIVERSARY

St. George Orthodox Cathedral Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

April 30 - May 2, 2004

His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel will preside

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, April 30

7:00 p.m. Vespers and Parastas for departed members of St. George Parish with reception following in church hall

Saturday, May 1

6:00 p.m. Vespers, with reception following in church hall

Sunday, May 2

8:30 a.m. Matins

9:45 a.m. Greeting and Vesting of the Archbishop

10:00 a.m. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy

1:00 p.m. Festive Banquet at Delta Regina, 1919 Saskatchewan Drive

If you have any questions please call: Church office (306) 352-0112 in a.m. Mr. Robert Buchanan (306) 761-0625

THE VIKINGS ARE COMING! OR, DOES OBJECTIVE TRUTH EXIST?

Recently, over a "public-funded" radio network, a short program was aired about a revival in Denmark of "The Viking" tradition. Harking to their "roots," supporters of this "rediscovered age" pre-dating the planting of Christianity in the Norse Lands stated that in returning to their original tradition, they have found their true identity. They have rediscovered the essence of being a true Dane. Explicit in embracing Vikingism is the rejection of the powerful and positive role Christianity played in the history of Denmark.

Complete with a "revival" of pagan ritual, music, and "ideals," the de-Christianized Danes who now embrace their past with fervor have "finally found their place under the sun," they have re-discovered "truth!" One of the new "Viking Dames," stated that she is glad that there are now "many gods" to worship, among whom are also women, and she is pleased that her daughter, although too young now to understand the new "Viking tradition," will at least know that its values were dear to her mother.

One Dane who does criticize this re-establishment of "Vikingism" points out the fallacy of the romanticism of this movement lies in its naivet. The Danes of the past valued cruelty, not love nor respect for human life. Theirs was a society of destruction, of human sacrifices and disregard for life. As often happens with the "reestablishment" of something dead, something essentially new is created which does not and cannot recapture that past reality in its own "sitzimleben" even thought the fabricators are certain that they know how it was at the time of its demise. Certainly the Danes who embraced Christ did so with full knowledge of what they were rejecting; and they did so and still considered themselves to be true Vikings, but Vikings shed of their cruel and barbarous "values."

The Vikings, as well as other pre-Christianized pagans roaming the European Continent, pillaged and raped, burned folk alive, committed gruesome, tortuous murder and took into slavery the few captives they let live. Also at this time, along with the Pagans in Europe, Moslem invaders into Christian lands (including Mount Athos) were also enslavers of Europeans and Africans. One has only to recall that the infamous "Janissaries," young Christian boys brought up in Islam to serve the Sultan, are the invention of the Turkish Sultans, an invention which continued until the final dismemberment of the that empire.

So great was the fear that they instilled in Christian and non-Christian folk alike, that all prayed to be delivered from the "scourge from the North." A petition was introduced into the liturgical life of the Church that "... the Lord free us from the scourge of the Vikings!" Today, in the Orthodox services, we con-

tinue to pray for those "...captives and for their salvation." The prayer is not a remnant from the past but a sincere plea before the throne of the Almighty for Christians living under repressive laws and governments.

This search for "pre-Christian roots," is a conscious rejection of Truth as revealed, Objective Truth. It is a descent into the darkness of idolatry which, with the dawning of the birth of the Savior, the "Sun of Righteousness," was dispelled. The powers of darkness have not finished with their fight for the souls of the sons and daughters of God.

In a recent article in "The Dawn," (Winter 2003) the Diocesan Newspaper of the Diocese of the South, His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri wrote, "Thoughts on the Nativity of our Lord." The article is reprinted elsewhere in SOLIA. We quote some lines from his article which sums up the nonsense of such movements as the return to a Viking past to return to the darkness which blinds those who reject Truth as Godrevealed in the Person of Jesus Christ.

The tragedy is that two thousand years later, man still turns his back on the truth, just as Pontius Pilate when he meets Him face to face. Man's quest for knowledge is still without its basic point of reference, God, and becomes increasingly distorted and corrupt. The world seems to be bent on the self-destruction and meaning-lessness that comes from atheism. Everything is worshiped and served, even the stars, by men in the modern world. Man is convinced that he can find happiness, purpose and fulfillment without God - Adam's fundamental sin.

Of further interest is that the Danish Government has extended to "priests" of this movement official authorization to preside over marriages. What their presence at such a ceremony means is of little importance, but what is important is that a government which for millennia has been Christian has in theory accepted the values of the ancient "Vikings" as acceptable for this day and age!

Only the Orthodox Church continues to hold that the Church marries the couple. The Roman Church, after Vatican II, revised its traditional stand that it is the Church which sanctifies a marriage. Most others hold that the couple marries one another and that the priest / minister / rabbi / mufti / mayor / Justice-of-the-Peace, is only a witness, albeit an "official" one to this exchange of words.

Thus, it came to be that couples create their own ceremony and marry in whatever environment and place seems "great" to them. What with pre-nuptial arrangements, certainly the words exchanged are not

Cont. on page 5

"Double? or Nothing?"

"A Word to the Wise is Sufficient!" so goes an ancient proverb. The title of this article, however, is based not on a wise proverb but on a gambler's call. Does it speak of recklessness or of solid assurance of success? Laying aside any reference to gambling, this call could be aptly applied to the mission effort of the Church in North America in her service to her Christ.

The true nature of the Church is, by her divine calling, missionary. Mission can be within a nation and to the outside. The concern of this article is mission within the nation. In this regard, "nation" refers to Canada, as well as, to the United States. Mexico has its own particular needs.

Orthodoxy was brought to North America both through the planned mission program of the Church of Russia and through the un-planned establishment of parishes by immigrant faithful from other Orthodox nations. In the first instance, the Church of Russia instituted an authentic mission program to reach the Native Alaskans. In the second instance, immigrants brought their faith with them to nourish and comfort them in the New World with little concern to reach out to others. One reached out to establish the faith, and the other turned inward to preserve the faith.

After two hundred years of the existence of Orthodoxy in North America, we find that these two missionary efforts continue: mission to the outside mostly through the work of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (O.C.M.C.), while mission within is in the hands of hierarchs.

Every jurisdiction establishes new (mission) parishes. In most cases, mission means establishing a worshiping community for a particular ethnic group. In other words, it is the continuation of the activity initiated by the early immigrants to these shores and tends to be more conservative than missionary. Even those parishes which are established as "American" often have "ethnic" founders upon whom the new community was based, and this "patchwork" gives the mission a unique "flavor."

There is a particular mission recently established under the jurisdiction of an ethnic hierarch whose priest sends out postcards reminding individuals of the forthcoming service schedule. Around the edge of the postcard are invitations to "Greeks, Russians, Romanians, Serbians, Ukrainians, etc.," to attend. This is an effort to reach out to those who are already Orthodox but who have no 'ethnic' church to attend and who accommodate to a multiplicity of liturgical languages along with English.

The Greek-American Community, unlike the former "Iron Curtain Nations" (ICN), has enjoyed continuous immigration over the decades since the Russian Revolution. Its ethnic identity remained strong while those of the ICN nations were weakened by the "shame" of

belonging to a people labeled as "communist" and as the "Red Threat."

With the apparent change of governments in the former "ICN," "Orthodox" immigration to North America has increased greatly. A multitude of new missions for ethnic identifiable immigrants has been established for Romanians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Russians, Ukrainians and others. Thus, the growth in certain ethnic jurisdictions is based on this "mission within" rather than "mission to the outside." The Church is taking care of her faithful wherever

they may roam.

With the playing field of "Orthodox" immigration more or less leveled out, is the Church effecting mission within the nation or is it still merely maintaining and establishing communities for particular ethnic groups? How strong is the hierarchs' conviction to reach out beyond a particular ethnic pale? Is there a real concern? Only each hierarch knows his own conviction. We do suggest that not enough is being done to serve those of the ethnic groups who do not speak the language in which the Divine Liturgy is being served in their particular parish. Thus, the choice of the title, "Double or Nothing." Both language groups must be served. A hierarch who establishes English language parishes is acting in a pastorally-responsible way befitting his role as shepherd of the "reasonendowed flock."

Does it not make sense and is it not a responsibility to create new parishes using the English language for those faithful? Over the decades, every ethnic church has lost the majority of their faithful, because they no longer understood the language of the Divine Services. They were lost, too, because their non-ethnic spouses were not welcomed and the spiritual education of their children ignored. They were lost, too, because they were judged as not being able to fit into the "inner-circle" of the ethnic parish. They were lost, too, by the droves, swallowed up by those who did serve them in an understandable language, and large numbers enrolled in non-Orthodox churches.

How often has hierarch, priest or layman said, "If they can't learn the language then let them go elsewhere!" Among the many stories reflecting this devastating attitude is that of a certain priest who, when approached by a small group of his faithful interested in learning more about the Bible in English, informed them that it was not necessary and that they should spend time learning the language of their forefathers. Today, that group is enlarged and exists as a Pentecostal Community of Christians who study the Bible but are now bereft of the sacraments and teachings of the Orthodox Church.

Some of the leaders of the Church, of thrice-blessed memory, Metropolitan Anthony Bashir, Archbishop Valerian Trifa, Archbishop Metrophan Noli, published by-lingual liturgical texts for use in their ethnic parishes. We can also glory in the efforts of our Holy Fathers Among the Saints, Bishop Innocent and Metropolitan Tikhon who championed the use of the spoken tongue of the Alaskan Christians, in addition to using Old Slavonic. Possibly the merit goes to the Antiochian Church in North America that first established English-speaking parishes, and most of the Dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America establish new missions with English as the liturgical language.

There is another story about the famous "Orloff" liturgical texts in English printed in St. Petersburg at the end of the 19th Century and shipped to North America. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Church in America turned inward, became defensive, insisted on the use of Old Slavonic over English and stored those beautiful books in the recesses of some basement area. This "conservative" attitude can be observed in all the ethnic Orthodox groups in North America which were affected by control of their homelands by atheistic communist governments. They must have felt as if they would become the "remnant." Although new generations did not learn the ethnic and liturgical languages, neither did the Church learn the English language of the land to sanctify it.

Furthermore, is it not incumbent upon the hierarchs to reach out to the un-churched in a language they can understand? The most famous example of the Slavonic-speaking Greek brothers, Saints Cyril and Methodios of Thessalonika, bears witness to the absolute necessity for intelligible communication of the teachings of Christ. There is both the need to establish more English-speaking missions to serve our faithful who do not speak one of the liturgical languages, as well as to establish totally new missions to reach out to bring others into the Church.

If the hierarchs, individually but much better in a synodal/collegial way, were to establish parishes for their faithful who no longer speak the ethnic language or cannot understand an archaic form of liturgical language, the service to our Lord would be doubled! If the hierarchs also established new missions as an outreach to the nation, the witness would be quadrupled! Thus, there is a need for two kinds of English speaking missions: those for the Orthodox who would be lost because of the incomprehensibility of liturgical language and for missions to the nation.

If we plant nothing, we reap the fruit of nothing. If we plant not, others do and reap our faithful. Isolated from each, our left hand knows not what our right is doing. We duplicate; we exacerbate; we complicate. The Holy Spirit is economical and blesses that which is well-planned. It is the same Holy Spirit, the Paraclete that gathered the hierarchs together 10 years ago in Ligonier. The two documents born of that unique SCOBA meeting held under the power of the Spirit of Truth are the touchstone to what was stated, what was promised and what has been implemented. We cannot gamble that which does not belong to us, the faith

given to us by the Lord. We have everything to lose but also everything to gain! "A reminder to the Wise is sufficient."

+NATHANIEL, Archbishop

The Vikings Cont. from page 3

"Vows," nor "Promises," or any other statement of lasting endurance, because they are totally subjective on the part of the two individuals. Now, the ancient "gods and goddesses" can once more be ethereal witnesses to the union of two of their worshipers!

An Orthodox Christian could argue that inasmuch as there is no sacrament involved, and as long as Orthodox Christians must marry in the Orthodox Church according to the established ceremony, why ought we be concerned with this action of the Danish Government? Precisely because it reflects a more and more generalized European mindset to reject Christianity in favor of the past, paganism, or the new, Islam. Nations whose histories reflect the reality of the real presence of Pentecost in their history through baptism into the Christian Faith are disrobing from their baptismal garb, putting on the weeds of paganism and heterodoxy. Such trends in Europe are not long in arriving on our shores.

The belief that man is created in the image and likeness of his Creator and which keeps our society from sliding into the abyss of despair, hatred and destruction, if replaced with a return, in fact or fancy to the "Fates" of the ancient Greeks, or "Thor, Freya, Woden" and the pantheon of false beliefs, including astrology, will usher in indifference to one's fellow and the "rule of the jungle" will replace the Ten Commandments and the Gospel of Christ. The pre-Christian statement, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," meant that one could not extract an exaggerated punishment for a wrong; in other words, equal retribution for a wrong was acceptable.

The Lord states, however, that one must love one's enemies. This is unique to all religions and philosophies, and it is what shaped modern Europe out of the chaos of migrations and barbarian invasions. What a shame that the Christian civilization which kept alive the ideal that man is made in the image of his Creator has been accused of being the cause of the "Dark" ages. On the contrary, the monasteries and the Church brought order and learning through the centuries of warring tribes and warlords.

Surely, it is not in returning to that which is "barbarian" and devoid of truth but to that which is of the "New Man" in Christ who is "the Way, the Truth and Life" which is the true roots to which mankind is called and to which he must return. Perhaps it is in the Third World Nations who are more recently coming out of the darkness of paganism, that the light of the Gospel will rekindle the light of Christ in Europe and the Americas.

+NATHANIEL, Archbishop

"THOUGHTS ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD"

By Archbishop Dmitri

Few people would deny that man's most basic drive, motivation, purpose, or even his reason for being is to know. The billions of dollars that are spent annually on space exploration, on probing the depths of the sea, and in thousands of branches of research, all in the name of science (which word itself means simply 'knowledge'), are sufficient testimony to this fact.

So it has been down through history, and man's knowledge of himself, the world and the whole universe is ever increasing. Man was created to know, because he was created in the image and likeness of God, the alknowing God, and that was God's design and plan for him.

What man wants to know, and indeed has to know, even if he is not aware of it, is the Source of all things, of all that is knowable. The object of all his longing and investigation is God Himself, who gave the world to man as the means by which to accomplish his reason for being.

The world ceased to be for mankind the means of knowledge of and communion with God, because knowledge, or science, became an end in itself, leading to nothing. (This is the way we may understand the 'tree of knowledge' in the Garden of Eden.) St. Paul said that "man in his wisdom knew not God" (I Corinthians 1:21). So distorted did everything in the life of man become that his knowledge led him away from God rather than toward Him. And then, the more man knows without reference to God, the less human he really is, given his nature and the purpose for his creation. "But what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 10). Misdirected knowledge is a corrupting knowledge, and even when man accumulates a vast storehouse of knowledge, as he is doing today, if that knowledge is godless, it is not only vain, but destructive. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind ..." (Romans 1:28).

Man made himself incapable of really knowing God and, consequently, of knowing himself, so high was the barrier that he erected between himself and God, so twisted did his use of knowledge become.

God did not, however, abandon man in his vanity and aimlessness. In fact, He entered into a pact with a people, Israel, and the purpose of that 'covenant' was that they might know Him, and through them, that He might prepare all men to be restored to communion with Him. A promise was made to Abraham, and it was repeated to Moses: "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God" (Exodus 6:7). When David gave his throne to his son, Solomon, his words to him were: "know the God of thy father, and serve Him ..." (I Chronicles 28:9). The people of Israel did not remain faithful, and they were reminded all through their history by the prophets that

the purpose of their having been chosen was knowing Him. "Thou shalt know the Lord" (Hosea 2:20).

The Lord, the eternal God, then literally entered into the world, into human history, and took on man's nature in order to make it possible for man to know God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath made Him known" (John 1:18). What was lost was restored, man's efforts were redirected, and the truth was revealed. Jesus Christ, born of a virgin mother almost two thousand years ago in Bethlehem, was God and man. He came to show man, in the life of the God-Man Jesus Christ, that the true object of his loving and his acquisition of knowledge was God Himself. He spoke with authority about both God and man, being both, as no other man had ever spoken or had been able to speak. He became the central figure of human history.

His birth "shown upon the world as the light of wisdom." Those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship Him, the Son of Righteousness, and to know Him, the Orient (or morning star) from on high (Nativity Troparion).

The tragedy is that two thousand years later, man still turns his back on the truth, just as did Pontius Pilate, when he meets Him face to face. Man's quest for knowledge is still without its basic point of reference, God, and becomes increasingly distorted and corrupt. The world seems to be bent on the self-destruction and meaninglessness that come from atheism. Everything is worshipped and served, even the stars, by men in the modern world. Man is convinced that he can find happiness, purpose and fulfillment without God — Adam's fundamental sin.

God's will, in making the great revelation of himself in the divine incarnation, was that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). A real humanness, an authentic existence for mankind, can only come from the knowledge of the Son of God: "... Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind ..." (Ephesians 4:13-14). Man is thus not a perfect or complete human being without that knowledge and will continue to be tossed about by every deceptive thing, as long as he does not have God.

The real meaning of the Nativity is often neglected even by those who bear the name of Christ, Christians. Once again, at this time of the year, we have the opportunity to reassess ourselves and our lives, to let ourselves be taught by the star of Bethlehem to know Him and to let that knowledge truly rule our lives, so that we many attain the stature of Christ, and in so doing, bring others to know Him, the true God. In this is eternal life (I John 5:20).

From "The Dawn", Winter 2003.

IN MEMORY OF ARCHIMANDRITE MARTINIAN IVANOVICI

NOVEMBER 16, 1909 - JANUARY 20, 1994

Ten years have passed since the falling asleep of the V.R. Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici, Fr. Martinian had three brothers and two sisters, numerous nieces and nephews. He was born in Romania on November 16, 1909. He entered the Slatina Monastery at the age of 12. In 1944, he received his doctorate in Theology. Among many other duties, he served the royal family while in Romania and established a "canteen" for immigrants in Paris, France, following the Second World War. In 1952, he came to Canada and served parishes in Windsor, Manitoba and Saskatchewan until his retirement. During his ministry, he served as Vicar to Archbishop Valerian of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, Dean, and was parish priest at St. George Cathedral in Regina from 1967 to 1982. From 1982 until near his passing, he resided at the Orthodox Christian Centre (which he established) in Fort Qu'Appelle. His last few months were spent at Lakeside Home in Wolseley.

Therein lies the life of a man. But what does it tell us about him? Very little. How do you describe someone like Fr. Martinian? Who was he? What was he?

He was a son, a brother, an uncle, a godfather, a spiritual father, a Vicar, a Dean, a parish priest, a monk, a friend, a father confessor. He was all that and to many of us even more. Hardly a day goes by that I or someone in my family doesn't think of something Fr. Martinian said or did and comment on it. His teachings, his humour, his wit, his unconditional love, his counsel, are etched in our memories and will be there for our lifetime.

Fr. Martinian's only purpose in life, as he saw it, was to serve God. He did this with resolute strength and a consuming need to do God's will, without thought of himself or his person. He was relentless in striving to achieve the goals he had set for himself. His consuming passion was to teach the young and spread Orthodoxy across Canada. He worked tirelessly to accomplish this.

During his ministry and under his leadership, improvements were made to the interiors of various small parishes. New churches were built in Blue Wing, Shell Valley and Winnipeg. Missions and parishes were established in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Fort Qu'Appelle. Summer camps were at Shell Valley, and used until the well ran dry, and then in Fort Qu'Appelle. His one wish left unmet at the time of his death was the placing of a church on the grounds at Fort Qu'Appelle. Very early in the establishment of the Centre, Fr. Marttinian pointed to a spot on the grounds where a church now stands, and said, "Someday there

will be a church there." His prophecy came true with the moving of a church on the grounds in August of 2001. It was consecrated as the Church of the Protection of the Holy Mother of God.

We give our thanks to God for the time we had Fr. Martinian in our midst. Although he is gone, he is not forgotten. The time has now come for us to continue the work of Fr. Martinian in establishing missions across the country. To enable this to happen, and to commemorate the 10th anniversary of his falling asleep in the Lord, the Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici Mission Fund has been established. All parishes are asked to hold a function and proceeds to be donated to the fund. Individuals may also contribute by completing the attached coupon and sending your donation to the Deanery Centre of Canada.

Psa. Alice Nenson Regina

ARCHIMANDRITE MARTINIAN IVANOVICI MISSION FUND

Romanian Orthodox Deanery of Canada

YES, I will make a donation to further the work of missions through the Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici Mission Fund.

Enclosed is my donation for:
____\$10 ____\$25 ____\$50 ____\$100
____ I prefer to give \$_____

Cheques should be made out to:
RODOC
Archimandrite Martinian Ivanovici
Mission Fund
P.O. Box 4023
Regina, SK S4P 3R9
Canada

Thank you for your generosity.

CITY: _			

POST CODE:

Please return this form with your gift. Tax receipts will be issued for gifts of \$10 or more.

BIABATE.

THE WEST COAST SPIRITUAL RETREAT OF THE EPISCOPATE CLERGY

The Episcopate organized the first annual clergy spiritual retreats in 2003. These retreats were made possible through the generous support of the Cristina Christia Education Fund. Given the large distances between our parishes and missions in North America, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel decided to organize these retreats in two sessions: one on the East coast and one on the West coast.

The first session of the retreat took place from June 10-12, 2003 at the Holy Ascension Monastery in Detroit. Besides H.E. Archbishop Nathaniel and H.G.

Bishop Irineu, thirty clergy attended.

The West Coast session took place from November 4-6, 2004 at the retreat center of the Sacred Heart monastery in Alhambra, CA. Besides the retreat leader, H.E. Archbishop Nathaniel, 17 members of the clergy participated: the Archpriests Simion Pavel, Constantin Alecse, and Dumitru Paun, the Priests Cornel Avramescu, Dr. Catalin Mitescu, Andrew Lesko, Ioan Andrisoaia, Ioan Catana, Constantin Lapustea, Eugene Rosu, William John Clark, Cosmin Vint, the Deacon Vasile Simonca, and the Subdeacons Narcis Stoica, Dr. Iosif Razvan Bena, and Liviu George Constantinescu.

The retreat theme: "Serving our True God and Savior, the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, in the 21st Century," was chosen because of the beginning of Advent. The discussion focused on the recently-published book, "Clergy Killers," by the Lutheran Pastor G. Lloyd Rediger. This book discusses the usually benign conflicts inside a parish which can sometimes become abnormal and abusive.

During the three days of the retreat, each participant had the opportunity to present himself and his church activity. We also discussed problems which arise in church administration and the relations between the priests and laity. Two of the participants (Fr. Andrew Lesko and Bill Clark) who have special ministries, shared their experience in mission work with specifically English communities. Their presentations were well received, and generated lively discussions about the opportunities to bring America to Orthodoxy.

We also discussed the implications of our deeper involvement in pan-Orthodox activities, the role of our Episcopate in promoting Orthodox unity in North America, and the continuous work of Orthodox laity groups (like OCL) towards achieving this unity. Our Archbishop shared with us his vision of a united American Orthodoxy and of an American Orthodox Patriarchate. We also discussed the relations between the two Romanian Orthodox jurisdictions in North America.

During the three days of spiritual activities, the clergy served Vespers and the Divine Liturgy. Fr. Simion Pavel was designated as the spiritual father of the retreat, and many of the clergy had the possibility to open their soul to him in the sacrament of confession.

Every day, the nuns of the Sacred Heart monastery prepared and served delicious meals. On one evening, the entire monastery sisterhood inspired us with two very beautiful spiritual songs. As guests, we returned this gift by singing the Hymn to the Birthgiver of God, "It is truly meet." At the end of the retreat, it was decided to have a similar retreat at the same retreat house, November 8-11, 2004.

THEOLOGICAL HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

For those interested in receiving a **Doctor of Ministry in the Eastern Christian Context**, the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, in partnership with the Antiochian House of Studies, has formed a new class in the Doctor of Ministry Program, its 10th year in existence. This is an advanced degree for those who already have the Master of Divinity degree. Courses are taught in one-week, intensive sessions – one in May and two at the end of the summer – over a three-year period, following which students launch into the project and doctoral paper phase of the program. Contact: chambrick-stowe@pts.edu or 800-451-4194 or 412-362-5610 ext. 2112.

For those interested in receiving a Master of Arts in Orthodox Christian Studies, the Graduate Theological Union and Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute have collaborated to create the degree. Students wishing to enroll for September 2004 may do so now. It is not designed to prepare a student for ordained ministry within the Orthodox Church. For information: paoi@gtu.edu, www.orthodoxinstitute.org, or 510-649-3450.

FEBRUARY ISSUE DEADLINE
February 6

AN ORDINATION OF A SON OF THE PARISH

Glory to you, Christ God, the apostles' boast, the joy of the martyrs, whose preaching was the consubstantial Trinity.

O holy martyrs, who contended valiantly and were crowned; intercede with the Lord for us, that we have mercy on our souls.

Dance Isaiah! For the virgin was with child and bore a son, Immanuel: God and man. Orient is his name. In glorifying him, we praise the virgin.

While the clergy and choir sang these beautiful tropars familiar to all us from the marriage service, Fr. Cornel Todeasa, parish priest and mentor, and Fr. Casian Fetea

(St. Mary's Romanian, Queens and Dean of New England Deanery) escorted Dn. George Coca around the altar table. This triple procession with stops to kiss the altar on each side signifies a "marriage" to the altar and to the Church. His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel is seated at the normal place for an ordination and the candidate comes to him, bows, and kisses his "epigonation" and hand as a further sign of the



His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel with newly-ordained Fr. George Coca and assisting clergy.

ordinand's submission and loyalty to the Episcopate and its leader.

The church was overflowing with 600 participants and many clergy participating. Archimandrite Gregory O'Keefe (St. Barbara Greek) and Protopresbetyr Demetrios Recachinas (Holy Trinity Greek and President of the Greater Bridgeport Clergy Association) presented Dn. George to His Eminence at the solea

where he recited the pledge of loyalty. In addition, other clergy participating in the ordination Archpriest Sergei were Bouteneff (St. George Albanian, Trumbull), Fr. Vadim Pismenny (Holy Ghost Russian, Bridgeport), Fr. Onisie Morar (St. John Romanian, Woonsocket), Fr. Peter Benyo (St. John Carpatho Russian, Bridgeport), Fr. Stephen Masliuk (St. Mary's Ukranian, Bridgeport), Fr. Andrei Turcoane (Banat, Serbia), Fr. Nicolae Regos (St. Dimitrie) and Subdeacon Wylie Meath (St. John Capatho Russian, Straftford). Archimandrite Lev was sick and had to cancel plans to come.

After the ordination, a reception was given in the hall by Father's family in honor of his ordination and to honor all of the guests. The new set of *Cont. on page 10*



Fr. George Coca with his family following the ordination.

PAN-ORTHODOX WOMEN'S RETREAT HELD IN SASKATCHEWAN



"Had a wonderful time. Hope you continue having this retreat."... "Great weekend. Speaker was great - would love to have heard more. Great to meet people and get away from the world."... "Wonderful, wonderful. Thank you so much."

These are a few comments from 49 Orthodox Christian women who attended a weekend retreat on September 5-7, 2003 at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, entitled: "Living an Orthodox Life in a Non-Orthodox World," led by Matushka Valerie Zahirsky, a graduate of Saint Vladimir's Seminary in New York and wife of Father Michael, pastor of St. Andrew Orthodox Church (OCA) in Ohio.

The idea of a retreat was borne out of a group of women from Regina, SK attending a retreat in Calgary, AB and feeling that there was a need for a similar gathering for women in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. A blessing was received from the South Saskatchewan Orthodox Clergy Association, and the plans were set in motion. Women from all walks of life, young and old, came from Orthodox communities throughout Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

Matushka Valerie very ably presented the sessions "Changing the World (or least our little piece of it)", "Saints & Holy People who Travel with Us" and "Nurturing and Sharing our Orthodox Faith". As a result, we learned how Christianity's perception of God differs from other religions. How good it is to be reminded of the truths of our faith! We now look at icons differently and realize that the smallest action can be the most powerful witness of our faith. We have many examples of women throughout time who have influenced others by leading a godly life.

The question and answer session was very enlightening - we came from diverse parishes and saw that we have similar concerns and cares for our faith and our families.

The idea of having Orthodox Christian women gather in the quiet of the country, to share our concerns, our hopes and our fears of the future of our church, to fellowship with each other, to sing together, to pray together and to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord and Master together became a reality - one that we hope will continue for many years.

Thrisia Pana

An Ordination Cont. from page 9

beautiful gold vestments were a gift from the Ladies Auxiliary.

It was a beautiful weekend spent with His Eminence, who arrived on Friday. We celebrated Vespers on Friday night, the Liturgy for the ordination on Saturday, Saturday evening Vespers for the Cross, and Divine Liturgy with procession of the Holy Cross on Sunday. It truly was a prayer-filled three days. On Sunday evening, some members of the Council were able to meet with His Eminence at dinner. It was a very spiritual weekend for all who participated to witness an ordination to the priesthood, and of course, to have our chief shepherd in our midst after some time from his last visit to us. At our parish's patronal feast day banquet on October 26, Fr. George was honored and his brother John as well, and they were presented with a beautiful cross plaque and certificate of appreciation. The parish council also gifted Father with a beautiful set of vestments for Pascha. Fr. George is a late vocation, but we hope and pray that all our parishes will foster and encourage other sons to the highest calling — that of serving at the Lord's Holy Altar.

CLEVELAND / CANTON CHURCHES REJOICE IN NATIVITY ORATORIO



Cleveland, Ohio - Nearly half of the 32 Orthodox parishes in Cleveland, Ohio participated in the Eleventh Annual Nativity concert. The program was hosted this year by St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Rocky River and brought together 15 choral groups, including cantors and the "Theophania" vocal group of Theology students from Sibiu, Romania. St. Mary Cathedral was represented by three groups, including the AROY choir, George Enescu Choir directed by Mary Jane Vendel, and the fine cantors of the cathedral, Cris Frunzulica and John Satnojanu. With the coordination of Mrs. Yvette Ittu, Church School Director, and Debra Seidner, Parent's Club President, the children of St. Mary Church School embodied the roles of the Angels, the star-bearers and the magi, adding a special touch to this inspirational event.

Fr. Remus Grama, who has been the heart of this program since its inception, composed and organized the program, publishing again a booklet of the entire concert. The proceeds collected at this inter-Orthodox program which is comparable in intensity to the Sunday of Orthodoxy, are directed to support the charity mission of St. Herman's Monastery which feeds over 300 homeless people every day of the year. Inspired by this, the Orthodox parishes in Canton, Ohio, are doing the same under the leadership of Rev. Fr. George Treff. Through such programs, slowly but surely, Orthodox unity in America is gaining a life of its own!



HIERARCHAL SCHEDULE

October 29 - November 1. Cleveland, OH. Orthodox Christian Laity Annual Meeting. Advisor.

November 2. St. George Cathedral. Southfield, MI. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with His Grace, Bishop Daniil of Varset and His Grace, Bishop Irineu on the occasion of the First Anniversary of his Episcopal Consecration. Reception. Evening: Detroit, MI. St. Raphael Mission. Attended Jamie Farah Wedding.

November 3-7. Alhambra, CA. Sacred Heart Monastery. Clergy Retreat. Retreat Leader.

November 8. Anaheim, CA. St. Mary. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for Sts. Michael & Gabriel feast day.

November 9. Los Angeles, CA. Holy Trinity. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

November 13-15. Washington, DC. Congress of Romanian Americans Annual Meeting.

November 16. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

November 23. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

November 27-30. Calgary, AB. Men's Silent Retreat. Retreat Leader.

December 5-7. Indianapolis, IN. Sts. Constantine & Elena. Friday: Vigil for feast of St. Nicholas. Saturday: Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Ordination of Deacon John Schmidt into the Holy Priesthood. Evening: Great Vespers. Sunday: Matins. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Banquet.

December 14. Southfield, MI. St. George Cathedral. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Memorial Service for Fr. Eugen Lazar and Virginia Vincent.

December 15-16. Colleyville, TX. St. Mary. Visit. Wichita Falls, TX. Holy Cross Greek Church. Wake Service for Fr. George Preda. Dallas, TX. Holy Trinity Greek Church. Funeral Service for Fr. George Preda concelebrated with His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri. Evening: Dallas, TX. St. Seraphim OCA Cathedral. Visit as guest of Archbishop Dmitri.

December 20-21. Hermitage, PA. Holy Cross. Pastoral Visits. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Banquet for Judge John Regule for 75th birthday.

December 24. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Royal Hours. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Vigil for Nativity of the Lord.

December 25. Southfield, MI. St. George Cathedral. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for feast of Nativity of the Lord.

December 26. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Traditional Carol Singing.

December 27. Grass, Lake, MI. Vatra Romaneasca. St. Mary Chapel. Presided at Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Irineu.

December 28. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 31. Rives Junction, MI. Dormition Monastery. Presided at Vigil for the feast of the Circumcision of Christ and commemoration of St. Basil the Great.

AUXILIARY BISHOP SCHEDULE

October 5. Cleveland, OH. St. Mary Cathedral. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with His Grace, Bishop Vasile Somesanul.

October 11-12. Las Vegas, NV. St. Mary Mission. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

October 18-19. Hazleton, PA. St. Joseph of Maramures. Pastoral Visit. Baptism of Daniel Stafiuc, son of Rev. Fr. Traian & Monalisa Stafiuc. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

October 21-23. Syosset, NY. OCA Chancery. Fall Session of the Holy Synod.

October 24. New York, NY. St. Dumitru. Accompanied His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel to the Atlantic Deanery meeting.

October 26. Cleveland, OH. St. Mary Cathedral. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with His Grace, Bishop Daniil of Varset. Reception welcoming President Iliescu of Romania with delegation.

November 1-2. Southfield, MI. St. George Cathedral. Great Vespers with His Grace Bishop Daniil of Varset. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel and Bishop Daniil on occasion of First Anniversary of Episcopal Consecration.

November 8. Detroit, MI. Ascension Monastery. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for feast of Holy Archangels Michael & Gabriel.

November 9. Dearborn Heights, MI. Sts. Peter & Paul. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy concelebrated with His Grace, Bishop Daniil of Varset.

November 15-16. Nashville, TN. St. John Chrysostom Mission. Pastoral Visit. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy for patronal feast day.

November 21. Castro Valley, CA. Holy Cross Monastery, Visit. Sacramento, CA. Sts. Michael & Gabriel. Holy Unction Service.

November 23. Sacramento, CA. Sts. Michael & Gabriel. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

November 30. Alexandria, VA. Holy Cross. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

December 1. Washington, DC. Romanian Embassy. Reception for commemoration of Unification of Transylvania with Romania (1918).

FIRST MEETING OF THE LOCAL HOLY SYNOD OF THE SELF-RULED ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

The first meeting of the Local Holy Synod of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America was held on December 29th and December 30th, 2003 at the Archdiocese Headquarters in Englewood, New Jersey. The meeting was historic in that it represented the first time that the bishops have met as a Local Holy Synod, after the granting of self-rule status to the Archdiocese by the Holy Synod of Antioch in October of 2003.

His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate of the Archdiocese, presided. In attendance were three of the Antiochian Bishops of North America: His Grace Bishop ANTOUN, His Grace Bishop JOSEPH, and His Grace Bishop BASIL. His Grace Bishop DEMETRI was not in attendance.

The focus of this meeting was to reach agreement on several very important topics which will allow the orderly implementation of self-rule.

Plans for the Special Convention were discussed. The Special Convention will have two primary agenda items. First, the approval of amendments to the Archdiocese Constitution which are necessary for the implementation of self-rule. Second, the nomination of candidates who will stand for election as Diocesan Bishops of this Archdiocese. The Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese of North America will elect the new Diocesan Bishops sometime after this Special Convention.

Second, two documents were reviewed which put forth the Rights and Responsibilities of the Metropolitan, and the Rights and Responsibilities of the Diocesan Bishops. These documents specify, in detail, the working relationship between the Primate of the Archdiocese and his Diocesan Bishops, who will receive enhanced responsibilities within their diocese. These documents were approved unanimously.

Third, the bishops reviewed a document which specifies the proposed structure of the Archdiocese. Each Diocese was identified, along with the Cathedral which will serve as the seat of the Diocesan Bishop, and the geographical boundaries of each diocese. This document was also approved unanimously.

GOLDY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT FOR 2003



Cristian Zaharie

We are pleased to announce that the recipient of the Dumitru Golea Goldy-Gemu Scholarship for 2003 is Cristian Marius Zaharie. Cristian is a student at Western Michigan University, Battle Creek, Michigan, where he has completed two years toward his major course of study in Aviation Flight Science. His letters of recommen-

dation point to his strong study and social skills, his natural abililty to learn quickly, and his hard work and determination. Cristian was born in Romania and has since become a naturalized United States citizen. He comments that the adjustment to a new life in America was rough at times, but that his Romanian heritage has made him a hard worker, goal oriented and trustworthy, giving him the confidence to pursue his dream of becoming a pilot. Cristian is the son of is the son of Maria Zaharie of Garden City, Michigan, and they are members of Sts. Peter & Paul Romanian Orthodox Church, Dearborn Heights, Michigan.

SCOBA NAMES OCN NEWEST AGENCY

Ft. Lauderdale (December 1) – SCOBA (The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas) has commissioned a new agency at their fall meeting in New York City.

On Tuesday, November 25, 2003, the members of SCOBA unanimously voted to approve Orthodox Christian Network (OCN) as the newest commissioned agency recognized by SCOBA to serve the Orthodox Christians of America. OCN is the first commissioned agency of SCOBA charged with creating a national media presence for Orthodox Christianity in America.

Fr. Christopher Metropulos, the founder of OCN, and the co-host on the radio program, Come Receive The Light, presented to the hierarchs the work OCN is doing in growing an Orthodox Christian media ministry. The radio program is currently heard in 16 cities across the US and available on the internet at www.receive.org. The goal of OCN is to be airing at least once a week in the top twenty five (25) media markets in three years.

Orthodox Christian Network is headquartered in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and is a member of the National Religious Broadcasters. Contact: Chuck Powell: 800-358-3088.

In Memory VERY REVEREND GEORGE PREDA

February 10, 1917- December 11, 2003



Fr. George Preda

George Preda was born February 10, 1917, in Finta, Dambrovita, Romania to Pavel and Ana nee Constantin Preda. He graduated from Sts Peter & Paul School in Ploesti, the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, 1936-41; and attended Theology Schools in Munich and the Protestant Faculty in Paris. He earned the M.A. at Wayne State University (Mich.) and the Ph.D. in French at Louisiana State University,

Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

He was ordained into the diaconate on November 4, 1945 by Metropolitan Seraphim (Ladde) at the request of Metropolitan Visarion (Puiu) in the St. Seraphim Chapel, Munich and ordained into the priesthood in 1945 by Bishop Alexander (Losky) at Holy Savior Church, Munich. He was received into the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America on January 1, 1954 by Bishop Valerian D. Trifa.

He served parishes in Bavaria (1945-48) and Sts. Michael & Gabriel Church in Paris, France (1948-51). He immigrated to Canada to serve the Holy Resurrection Church in Hamilton, Ontario (1951-54). In that year, he immigrated to the United States and came to serve the Episcopate at St. Mary Church in St. Paul, Minnesota (1954-55) and in 1956 came to serve the St. George Cathedral in Detroit (1956-67). He resigned in that year and took a prolonged leave of absence. In 1980, he organized "The Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary" Parish in Colleyville, Texas, which he served until he retired in 1991. Bishop Nathaniel elevated him to the rank of Protopope in March, 1991. He also helped found the parish in Houston. After his retirement, Father George served at the Greek Orthodox Church, Holy Cross in Wichita Falls, where he served until his death.

Father Preda was Spiritual Advisor to the ARFORA, 1961-63 and AROY from 1967-1981. He was an Associate Professor of French, German, and Philosophy at East Texas State University (now Texas A&M Commerce) from 1967-1981. Father Preda spoke Romanian, English, German, Italian, French and Spanish. His specialty was Literary Criticism.

In 1945, he married Maria Corina Ionescu of Giurgiu, Vlasca, who preceded him in death in 1983. He is survived by his son, Michael; daughter-in-law, Chriss; and grandsons, Andrew and Benjamin, of Wichita Falls. He is also survived by a sister, Puica; a brother, Stefan; and their families of Ploesti, Romania; and a brother-in-law, Mihai and his family of Bucharest, Romania.

His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel offered the Wake Service on Monday, at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, Wichita Falls and the Divine Liturgy and Burial Service for a Priest at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas on Tuesday, December 16, 2003. Interment at Restland Cemetery next to Preoteasa Corina.

His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South attended the Divine Liturgy and con-celebrated the funeral service with Archbishop Nathaniel. Serving with the Archbishop were Very Rev. Frs. Richard Grabowski and Dumitru Paun, Rev. Fr. Michael Lupu and local clergy.

2003 AROY SPORTS TOURNAMENT

St. George American Romanian Orthodox Youth (AROY) welcomed clergy, players, AROY National Board members and friends to Canton, Ohio on October 25-26. Events were arranged with our sister parish of St. George Serbian Church for use of their wonderful picnic pavilion and grounds for Saturday's events. Rev. Fr. Dragan Filipovic made sure that we were well taken care of

The day began with opening prayers, breakfast and an introduction by Fr. George Treff. Following a summary of rules of conduct, the games began. Participating football and soccer teams included: St. George, Canton, OH; Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Heights, MI; Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL; Presentation of Our Lord, Akron, OH; Holy Trinity, Youngstown, OH. We also welcomed players from Holy Cross, Hermitage, PA who joined with Youngstown. Games were played, spectators cheered, players ran and ran and ran. They were great! When all was finished, we recognized Presentation of Our Lord, Akron as football champs and Holy Nativity, Chicago as soccer champs for 2003.

Vespers was held at 6 pm with Frs. George Treff, Dragan Filipovic and Remus Bleahu concelebrating. Also in attendance were Fr. Richard & Psa. Hildegard Grabowski and Fr. Ian & Psa. Mary Lynn Pac-Urar. A supper and bonfire followed at the picnic pavilion, and the evening concluded with s'mores and the singing of traditional Romanian folk songs.

On Sunday, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at St. George Romanian Church. Following the services, Canton AROY members and parents prepared and served a delicious brunch to parishioners and guests. A presentation concluded the day with a welcome by Fr. George Treff, followed by awards and special recognition by Dan Hoarste (National AROY President), Jonathan Groza, Michael Pac-Urar and Lisa Nemes (Sports Committee).

May the faithful of our beloved diocese recognize the need to support wholeheartedly the efforts of our young people. May God grant our young people, their families, advisors, clergy and hierarchs many years!

Preoteasa Paula Treff

PARISH REGISTER

BAPTISMS

- Airinei, David Jordan, son of Mircea & Jamie Sue W. Airinei, Hagerstown, MD. St. Philothea Mission, Hagerstown, MD. Godparents: Gregory & Lisa Eckhart.
- Baciu, Marcus Christian, son of Ilie & Bianca T. Baciu, Addison, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Stanco, Maria, Michele & Jenifer Giurovici.
- Beloiu, Melissa Helen, daughter of Alexandru & Silvana Beloiu, Rolling Meadow, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Mihai & Zoe Moga.
 Bench, Lia Nicole, daughter of Steve & Georgia Bench, Alliance, OH. St.
- Nicholas, Alliance, OH. Godparents: Paighton & Elisabeth Conrad.

 Bouvier, Elizabeth Anca, daughter of Robert & Ioana P. Bouvier, Rockville,
 MD. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparents, Jonut D. Stree and Jackslein
- MD. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparents: Ionut D. Stroe and Izabela Mihut.
- Brahmbhatt, Anica Lia Delia, daughter of Alkesh & Dacia M. Brahmbhatt, Lake Mary, FL. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparents: Raman & Maria Chhina.
- Brebeanu, Diana Michaela, daughter of Dorin & Ecaterina D. Brebeanu, Etobicoke, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Ioan & Claudia Zemianschi.
- Burca, Alina Jade, daughter of Mihai & Kerri Burca, Kitchener, ON. St. John, Kitchener, ON. Godparent: Dean Kosanovic.
- Buzea, Cristoffer Anthony Sorin, son of Sorin & Carmen B. Buzea, Chicago, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Cristian & Rodica Borlovan.
- Chirila, Sebastian Emanuel, son of Cristian & Mariana P. Chirila, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Sorin & Dorina Covic.
- Ciubotran, Vlad Christian, son of Florin & Alina C. Ciubotran, Minnetonka,
- MN. St. Mary, St. Paul, MN. Godparents: Stefan & Zoia Harangus.
 Covaci, Albert William, son of William & Terezia Covaci, Glenview, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Dan & Angela Wagner.
- Covaci, Matthew George, son of William & Terezia Covaci, Glenview, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Dan & Angela Wagner.
- Cuvin, Anita Marie, daughter of Stefan & Michaela A. Cuvin, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Alin D. Panaitescu and Irina M. Cislaru.
- Deaconu, Mark Nicholas, son of Liviu D. & Corina E.O. Deaconu, Richmond Hill, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Catalin & Daniela Deaconu and Radu M. & Mihaela R. Mecea.
- Fedeles-Muller, Gabriel, son of Costel & Gabriela Fedeles-Muller, Hagerstown, MD. St. Philothea Mission, Hagerstown, MD. Godparent: Elena Marina Fedeles.
- Funduianu, Jaqueline Mary, daughter of Cristian M. & Lenuta A. Funduianu, Des Plaines, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Marius & Mirela Luchian.
- Futch, Jeremy Molan, son of James & Simona B. Futch, Chicago, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Remus, Cristina & Diana Ghebenei. Golubov, Gabriela Constantina, daughter of Dragoslav & Nicoleta D. Golubov.
- Monroe, WI. Godparents: Dorin & Melania Ciucur. Hall, Alexander Steven, son of Michael & Dana M. Hall, Naperville, IL. St.
- Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Adrian & Elizabeth Drumba.

 Horju, Isabela Marie, daughter of Florin & Loredana M. Horju, Buffalo
 Grove, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Tiberiu & Dubravca Iordan.
- Jefferson, Andrea Kianna, daughter of Gregory & Mihaela D. Jefferson, Riverdale, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparent: Elena Iftinca.
- Jeffreys, Matthew Alexander, son of Stuart & Andreia I.F. Jeffreys, Pickering, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Tom & Nevena Boyco.
- Junod, Gabriel Richard, son of Richard B. & Cristiana M.S. Junod, Downingtown, PA. Descent of Holy Spirit, Elkins Park, PA. Godparents: Robert M. & Stephanie A. Stanca.
- Kougias, Alexandra Valeria, daughter of Athanasiou & Susan N. Kougias, Chicago, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Steve & Jeanne Jurasek.
- Chicago, E. St. Mary, Chicago, H. Godparents. See & Scanne Stanke Stanke.

 Leboeuf, Sophie Mae, daughter of Michel & Rucsanda S. Leboeuf, Rosemere,
 QC. Annunciation, Montreal, QC. Godparents: Justin S. Sultana and Marie
 E. Leboeuf.
- Lungociu, Corey John, son of David & Ruth A. Lungociu, Canton, OH. St. George, Canton, OH. Godparent: Felicia Lungociu.
- Marcu, Luca Alexander, son of Dan & Nora O. Marcu, Montreal, QC. St. Nicholas, Montreal, QC. Godparents: Basile Gliga and Marcela Trana.
- Marla, Michael David, son of David & Rodica L. Marla, Chicago, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Vasile & Liliana Lohan.
- Mateian, Alexia Audrey, daughter of Ovidiu I. & Loretta M. Mateian, Laval, QC. Annunciation, Montreal, QC. Godparents: Vasile & Maria Moldoveanu. Moldovan, Julian Phil, son of Filip & Manuela C. Moldovan, Chicago, IL.
- Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Iulian & Dana Moldovan. Morrow, Marshall Lane, son of Michael & Melissa L. Morrow, Minerva,

- OH. St. Nicholas, Alliance, OH. Godparents: Matthew & Patricia Lewis. Nechita, Sara Alyssa, daughter of Lucian & Adina R. Nechita, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Marius Nan and Luana Oprea.
- Niculeanu, Misha Eric, son of Alexei & Luciana A. Niculeanu, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Manuel & Madalina Ochenatu. Nistor, Andrei Daniel, son of Mircea & Renata H. Nistor, Palatine, IL. Holy
- Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Valentin & Monica Georgescu. Nita, Ada Marie, daughter of Dorin & Mihaela B. Nita, Toronto, ON. St.
- Nita, Ada Marie, daughter of Dorin & Mihaela B. Nita, Toronto, ON. St George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Oliver & Mihaela Tabay.
- Olah, Sebastian Gabriel, son of Tibor & Gabriela G. Olah, Doylestown, PA. Descent of Holy Spirit, Elkins Park, PA. Godparents: Ioan & Victoria Chisar.
- Patrascu, Dylan Michael, son of Mihai & Raluca O.T. Patrascu, Brampton, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Alina M. Taparlea and Ioana S. Patrascu.
- Petrescu, Nicole, daughter of Eugen & Elena Petrescu, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparent: Antonela Elena Matei.
- Radu, Stephanie, daughter of Aurel & Maria C. Radu, Toronto, ON. St. George, Toronto, ON. Godparents: Emil & Florica Voica.
- Sidor, Sebastian, son of Cristian & Sorina R. Sidor, Skokie, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Sorin & Nicoleta Petrin and Vlad & Richel Gheorghe.
- Stamate, Alexia Gabriela, daughter of Stefan & Mihaela G. Stamate, Cambridge, ON. St. John, Kitchener, ON. Godparents: Marius & Dana Irimia.
- Steve, Meropi Ann, daughter of Christos & Amber S. Steve, Alliance, OH. St. Nicholas, Alliance, OH. Godparent: Lisa Ann Stevenson.
- Tesfa, Naomi Temelso, daughter of Temelso & Andom Ghenet Tesfa, Alexandria, VA. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparent: Yohana Habtom. Tesfai, Jacob Abraha, son of Menghistab & Eden A.W. Tesfai, Leesburg,
- Testal, Jacob Abrana, son of Menghistab & Eden A. W. Testal, Leesbur VA. Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA. Godparent: Yohannes A. Testal. Tridese, Abby Stanbasia doughter of Living & Cathy B. Tridese, Coast His
- Tudosa, Abby Stephanie, daughter of Liviu & Cathy P. Tudosa, Crest Hill, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Fanica & Vica Butnaru.
- Vieru, Noah George Alexander, son of Dragos & Barbara S. Vieru, Montreal, QC. St. Nicholas, Montreal, QC. Godparents: Mircea & Ruxandra Cleciu.
- Wagner, Eric Robert, son of Dan & Angela Wagner, Niles, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Florin & Maria Covaci.

RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH

Jones, Mary Elizabeth, Canton, OH. St. George, Canton, OH. Rev. Fr. George Treff.

MARRIAGES

- Anastasiu, Mihai Vasile and Ileana Roxana Preda, Montreal, QC. St. Nicholas, Montreal, PO. Godparents: Sorin & Joana Marinescu.
- Hall, Michael Steven and Dana Madalina Moraru, Naperville, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Adrian & Elizabeth Drumba.
- Moraru, Vladimir Vasile and Aura Fatu, Naperville, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL Godparents: Adrian & Elizabeth Drumba.
- Petca, Dumitru and Andreea Isabelle Raymondo, Chicago, IL. Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Pavel & Ileana Cebzan.
- Zulicic, Nikola and Priscilla Maria Dragoi, Chicago, IL. St. Mary, Chicago, IL. Godparents: Lucian & Viorika Turika.

FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD

- Bitri, Vjolica, 43. St. Thomas, St. Louis, MO.
- Bolovan, John, 88. St. George, Canton, OH.
- Costron, Liostina, 78. St. George Cathedral, Regina, SK.
- Covaci, Stefania, 63. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- Craciun, Chifor, 85. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- Cutean, Theodora, 92. Descent of Holy Spirit, Merrillville, IN.
- Fleser, Walter, 86. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- Iatzko, Ann, 78. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Heights, MI.
- Iurascu, Toader, 74. Holy Cross, San Jose, CA
- Kotolup, Anton, 60. St. Nicholas, Alliance, OH.
- Lupescu, Gabriel, 60. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- Motorjescu, Rose Vera, 87. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Heights, MI.
- Nicolici, John, 86. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- O'Kresik, Walter S., 89. Holy Cross, Hermitage, PA.
- Pipenur, William, 85. Holy Resurrection, Warren, OH.
- Radu, Stefan, 85. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- Stan, Aurelia, 75. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Heights, MI.
- Stoic, Peter, 80. St. Mary, Chicago, IL.
- Tifrea, Michael Jr., 83. Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Heights, MI.
- Topola, Nick George, 90. Descent of Holy Spirit, Assiniboia, SK.

FINANCIAL REPORT

EPISCOPATE SUPPORTERS
Anita Constant, Chicago, IL\$2,000.00
Anonymous \$500.00
Mark Vincent, Birmingham, MI\$500.00
Fr Catalin & Psa Nicole Mitescu, Claremont, CA \$350.00
Olivia Dickerman, Ypsilanti, MI\$250.00
Audrey Huston, Michigan Center, MI\$200.00
Dr/M Gheorghe Marinescu, West Bloomfield, MI \$200.00
Elena Rodica Bogdan, Gloucester, ON\$100.00
John T Bogdan, Glenside, PA
Cornel & Elena Cionca, San Jose, CA
M/M Cornel Cotosman, Addison, IL
M/M Traian Lascu, Port Richey, FL
M/M John Omorean, Little Canada, MN
Dr/M Ion Petrea, West Haven, CT\$100.00
M/M Dumitru Radu, Woodside, NY
Maria Timmons, Mississauga, ON\$100.00
Carmen Valentino, Philadelphia, PA\$100.00
Mary Valentino, Philadelphia, PA\$100.00
Augustin Vincent, Bloomfield Hills, MI\$100.00
M/M Peter Androne, Indianapolis, IN\$50.00
Dumitru & Valentina Bodiu, Dearborn Hts., MI \$50.00
M/M Paul Costea, Dearborn Hts., MI\$50.00
M/M George Fatsi, Fairfield, CT\$50.00
Audrey & George Fatsy, Trumbull, CT \$50.00
John & Marie George, Regina, SK
Adrian Herlea, Houston, TX\$50.00
Richard D Martin, Waldport, OR
George & Nancy Ittu, Cleveland, OH
Narcis & Violeta Stoica, Buena Park, CA\$50.00
Julie Uscatu, Bronx, NY
M/M Octavian Bertea, Warren, OH\$35.00
M/M George Chirca, Ridgewood, NY
Mary Tilea, Canfield, OH
Caterina Fatsi, Fairfield, CT\$25.00
Ray & Mary Sankey, New Castle, PA\$25.00
Steve Shank, Bradenton, FL\$25.00
Iustina Cantor, Commerce Twp, MI\$20.00
M/M Ovidiu Grama, Berea, OH\$20.00
GENERAL DONATIONS
Holy Cross Ladies Auxiliary, Hermitage, PA\$1,000.00
(Ladies Auxiliary Sunday)
St George Cathedral, Southfield, MI\$772.00
(Disc Donations)
Audrey Huston, Michigan Center, MI\$500.00
(Christmas Donation)
Maria Forrest, Troy, MI\$200.00
Marie Farca, Yardley, PA\$100.00
(I.M.O. Julia, Mary & Simion Bebean – Museum Fund)
Fr & Psa John Limbeson, Laguna Hills, CA
Filip & Dusita George, Clearwater, FL
(Christmas Donation)
Adrian Herlea, Houston, TX\$50.00
(Christmas Donation)
Helen V Bugariu, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI
M/M Fred Klus, Wixom, MI\$25.00
M/M C Fetelea, Dearborn, MI
(Christmas Donation)
M/M Michael Schester, Macomb Twp, MI\$10.00
MEMORIAM
M/M Constantin Prisecaru, Wyoming, MI \$100.00
(IMO Elizabeth Elena Urasche)

2011 1 2017	¢100.00
George & Vera Puscas, Midland, TX(IMO Marioara Motiu)	\$100.00
Iuliana Campean, Grosse Pointe Park, MI	\$20.00
(IMO Valentina Cornea)	
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EPISCOPATE ASSESSMENT Sts. Peter & Paul, Dearborn Hts, MI	\$22,750,00
Holy Trinity, Miramar, FL	\$16,050.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Warren, MI	\$15,000.00
St George Cathedral, Southfield, MI	\$13,650.00
St Mary Cathedral, Cleveland, OH	\$11,150.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Warren, MI	\$11,100.00
(2002 & 2003)	\$10.150.00
St George Cathedral, Regina, SK	\$10,130.00
St Dumitru, New York, NY	\$9.750.00
St Mary, St Paul, MN	. \$5,250.00
Holy Cross, Hermitage, PA	. \$4,700.00
St Mary, Elmhurst, NY	. \$4,350.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Merrillville, IN	
St Mary, Calgary, AB	. \$3,750.00
Holy Resurrection, Warren, OH	
St Thomas, St Louis, MI St Joseph, Hazleton, PA	\$2,000.00
St. George, Canton, OH	\$2,000.00
St Elias, Ellwood City, PA	. \$2,700.00
St Anne, Claremont, CA	
St Mary, Portland, OR	. \$1,700.00
Sts Constantin & Elena, Indianapolis, IN	
Three Hierarchs, Flushing, NY	. \$1,500.00
HIERARCHS TRAVEL FUND	
Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL	\$800.00
Fr Michael Lupu, Calgary, AB	\$517.60
Sts Constantin & Elena, Indianapolis, IN	
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Merrillville, IN	\$150.00
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Drs Eleanor & John Bujea, Regina, SK Thomas & Mary Stanil, Barrington, IL Atty Daniel Miclau, Fairview Park, OH Fr & Psa Catalin Mitescu, Claremont, CA St Anne, Pomona, CA Karen Koertge, Wheaton, IL Frank & Jane Weiner, Indianapolis, IN Andre & Donna Gib, Chandler, AZ M/M Andrew Gib, Ellwood City, PA Mary Rugh, Ellwood City, PA Anonymous George C Cantor, Cleveland, OH (IMO Andre Muresan) Helen Powell, Teaticket, MA CAMP VATRA HEALTH & ADMINISTRAT BUILDING PROJECT St Anne, Pomona, CA Cleveland AROY, Cleveland, OH DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS St Mary Ladies Auxiliary, St Paul, MN Gheorghe Lapuste, San Jose, CA MISSION ASSESSMENTS St Raphael, Detroit, MI St Mary, Watertown, MA St Philothea, Hagerstown, MD DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN ASSISTA Presentation of Our Lord, Fairlawn, OH WILLIAM R STANITZ - AROY SCHOLARSHIP FUND	.\$1,000.00 .\$1,000.00 .\$1,000.00 .\$250.00\$235.00\$200.00\$150.00\$100.00\$100.00\$50.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$365.00\$250.00\$1,000.00\$50.00\$1,000.00\$50.00\$1,000.00\$1,000.00\$1,450.00\$350.00\$350.00\$325.00
Drs Eleanor & John Bujea, Regina, SK Thomas & Mary Stanil, Barrington, IL Atty Daniel Miclau, Fairview Park, OH Fr & Psa Catalin Mitescu, Claremont, CA St Anne, Pomona, CA Karen Koertge, Wheaton, IL Frank & Jane Weiner, Indianapolis, IN Andre & Donna Gib, Chandler, AZ M/M Andrew Gib, Ellwood City, PA Mary Rugh, Ellwood City, PA Anonymous George C Cantor, Cleveland, OH (IMO Andre Muresan) Helen Powell, Teaticket, MA CAMP VATRA HEALTH & ADMINISTRAT BUILDING PROJECT St Anne, Pomona, CA Cleveland AROY, Cleveland, OH DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS St Mary Ladies Auxiliary, St Paul, MN Gheorghe Lapuste, San Jose, CA MISSION ASSESSMENTS St Raphael, Detroit, MI St Mary, Watertown, MA St Philothea, Hagerstown, MD DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN ASSISTA Presentation of Our Lord, Fairlawn, OH	.\$1,000.00 .\$1,000.00 .\$1,000.00 .\$250.00\$235.00\$200.00\$150.00\$100.00\$100.00\$50.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$25.00\$365.00\$250.00\$1,000.00\$50.00\$1,000.00\$50.00\$1,000.00\$1,000.00\$1,450.00\$350.00\$350.00\$325.00

CUVÂNT DE SUFLET

Iată că am pășit, prin mila lui Dumnezeu într-un Nou An, anul 2004 de la Nașterea Domnului. Dar data de 1 ianuarie ajunge să fie notată cu roșu în calendarele creștine nu pentru că începe un an calendaristic, ci pentru praznicele care s-au rânduit de la Cel-de-Sus în această zi; căci suntem chemați, mai întâi, la împărăteasca (deci prea aleasa) prăznuire după cuvântul scripturistic ce zice: "Când s-au împlinit 8 zile (de la Nașterea Pruncului în Betleemul Iudeii) ..., I-au pus numele Iisus, cum a fost numit de înger, mai înainte de a se zămisli în pântece." (Luca II, 21). Aici ne amintim - şi ne dăm, totodată, seama de legătura dintre aceste sărbători - , că la Duminica înaintea Nașterii s-a citit fragment evanghelic în care arhanghelul Gavriil spunea lui Iosif cel prea drept că pururea Fecioara Maria a zămislit de la Duhul Sfânt; și prin această derogare dumnezeiască de la legile firii, urma să nască Fiu ce va purta numele Iisus, "căci El va mântui poporul Său de păcate" (Matei I, 20-21). Acum înțelegerea noastră se limpezește și mai mult: ni-l putem apropia pe Iosua Navi, sau – altfel numit – Isus fiul lui Navi, care a fost izbăvitor al poporului său israelit, prin buna sa credință reușind să îi ducă de la rătăcirea de 40 de ani prin locuri desertice în țara Canaanului (Deuteronom XXXIV, 9 şi Iosua I, 1 urm.); ei bine, la fel urma să fie lucrare izbăvitoare împlinită prin Iisus – numit și "Hristos" -, dar de natură spirituală: urma să mântuiască întreg neamul omenesc din rătăcirea cumplită a păcatului, conducându-l în Împărăția Canaanului cel ceresc!

Dar tot în 1 ianuarie îl sărbătorim şi pe alesul Domnului, sfântul ierarh Vasile cel Mare, arhiepiscopul Cezareei Capadociei, cel care a fost – şi va rămâne – "temei neclintit Bisericii" lui Hristos, adică este unul din stâlpii răsăriți din Temelia – Hristos, pe care se sprijină învățătura cea mântuitoare. Însă îl înțelegem "neclintit" şi pentru că în fața păcătoșeniei noastre nu-şi schimbă principiile propovăduite, viața morală pe care a promovat-o prin faptele şi cuvintele sale, iar noi nu putem nădăjdui în mijlocirea sa către Domnul cerului şi al pământului decât dacă ne schimbăm radical dând curs pozitiv vieții noastre.

Prin această idee putem să ne întoarcem la Iordan, "râul cel frumos" trecut prin albie la vremea lui Iosua, dar mai târziu cu 1500 de ani, timp pomenit cu prilejul Praznicului din 6 ianuarie. Căci încă din Sâmbâta dinainte de Bobotează se anunță mesaj înnoitor: proorocul Ioan, Înaintemergătorul Domnului, venind la apa Iordanului "propovăduia spunând: Pocăiți – vă că s-a apropiat Împărăția cerurilor!" (Matei III, 1-2). Trebuie subliniat: nu este doar mesajul profetului, ci putem constata că este o înainte-afirmare a ceea ce Însuși Mântuitorul va propovădui după ispitirea din pustiul Carantaniei (adică imediat după Iordan); căci plecând "în Galileea..., a început Iisus să propovăduiască și să spună: Pocăiți-vă, căci s-a apropiat Împărăția

cerurilor!" (Matei IV, 12, 17). Iar termenul (şi starea de) "pocăință", fiind o traducere a grecescului "metanoia", presupune o schimbare esențială ce pleacă de la interior spre exteriorul ființei umane, de la mentalitate (fel de a gândi) la comportament (fel de a fi), ilustrând viața în Hristos, devenind "omul cel nou" (Efeseni II, 15) - cel atât de iubit şi sfântului Vasile cel Mare, precum tuturor Sfinților noștri Părinți.

Același Praznic mai "de pe urmă" aduce și temei pentru însușirea multimilenarei propovăduiri. (Căci se întâlnește aceast chemare și sub forma vechi testamentară, citind la Pilde: "Dă-mi, fiule, Mie inima ta, și ochii tăi să simtă plăcere pentru căile Mele! -XXIII, 26). Este impusă cu necesitate "metanoia", deoarece la apa Iordanului Își declină identitatea Cel care ne-o cere: nu este un om superior, ci este Dumnezeu Care S-a născut ca Om, sau, într-un singur cuvânt, Mesia Însuși, Care acolo a fost arătat cu toată certitudinea, fără nici un fel de dubiu! A fost arătat de către Tatăl ceresc - în glăsuire - și de către Duhul Sfânt – în pogorârea sub chip de porumbel – celui care putea percepe semnele divine, lui Ioan cel purificat în încercările pustiei; iar prin acesta tuturor celor prezenți, arătându-L ca Miel ispșitor, iar mai apoi, până la al său sfârșit pământesc mucenicesc (prin tăierea cinstitului său cap), vorbind celor care îl căutau și trimitând lângă Hristos pe cei dornici de a-L afla (vezi si Matei XI, 2).

Pentru cele petrecute la apa Iordanului – încă o dată, ARĂTAREA lui Mesia - Hristos, Praznicul se mai cheamă (după aceeași terminologie patristică), EPIFANIE. Aşadar socotirea acestui moment fiind asemenea Botezului pe care noi îl primim, este o eroare fatală, fiind vorba de erezie! Căci Taina Botezului spală pacate, pe când la Domnul nostru nu exista vreunul – nici măcar cel strămosesc, deoarece la Buna Vestire, Fecioara Maria, prin Pogorârea Sfântului Duh, a fost purificată înainte de a zămisli după cum ne mărturisește Scriptura cea Sfântă: "Îngerul a zis Mariei: Duhul Sfânt se va pogorî peste tine şi puterea Celui Preaînalt te va umbri (curăți); pentru aceea și Sfântul (adică fără de păcat) ce se va naște din tine, Fiul lui Dumnezeu se va chema...!" (Luca I, 35). Iar din reproducerea cuvintelor Sf. Ioan Botezătorul, mai avem încă o dată mărturisit motivul prezenței lui Iisus Hristos. Căci zice cel mai mare dintre prooroci: "Eu nu-L stiam; dar ca să fie arătat lui Israil, de aceea am venit eu" (Ioan I, 31). Sau ca să ne folosim și de cuvinte mai înalte, vom cita pe sfântul Ioan Gură de Aur: "La botezul lui Ioan în apele Iordanului, el cerea tuturor pocăința. De aceea și botezul lui era numit botezul pocăintei. Cu toate acestea, lui Iisus Hristos nu I–a cerut Ioan pocăință. Dimpotrivă, în fața Lui el s-a simtit umilit, zicând că el însuși avea nevoie a se boteza de către Iisus și nu invers (Matei III, 14). Nici nu-I putea cere deoarece Iisus nu avea păcate, căci era zămislit din Duhul Sfânt, iar nu din pofta trupească, nici din pofta bărbătească (Ioan I, 13). Dar nu avea

Retragerea Spirituală a Preoţimii Episcopiei ROEA (Coasta de Vest)

Beneficiind de o donație testamentară din partea generosului donator din Sudul Californiei, "Cristina Christia's Estates" (cu scop strict educativ), Cancelaria Sfintei Episcopii a hotărât inițierea unei retrageri spirituale anuale a preotimii ortodoxe din Episcopia ROEA (proiect ce va continua consecvent și în anii următori), începând cu anul 2003. Considerând distanțele geografice dintre parohiile și misiunile Episcopiei, răspândite pe întregul Continent Nord American - Statele Unite și Canada -, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, a găsit de cuviință ca prima retragere spirituală, să se desfșoare în două sesiuni, în 2 locuri și la date diferite, una pe Coasta de Est, si cealaltă pe Coasta de Vest, oferind astfel slujitorilor Episcopiei posibilitatea de a alege la care anume retragere spirituală să participe, potrivit aranjamentelor celor mai potrivite, de timp, și distanță geografică.

Aceste retrageri spirituale se vor impune ca un program necesar de educație continuă a preoțimii Episcopiei ROEA, complimentând astfel conferința preoțească, prilejuită de participarea la congresele anuale, precum și sesiunea specială educațională care, anul acesta, s-a desfșurat în luna septembrie crt., la Centrul Sfântului Andrei din Detroit, Michigan.

La prima retragere spirituală, din perioada 10-12 iunie 2003, ce a fost găzduită de cinul monahal al

mânăstirii "Înălţarea Domnului", din Detroit, MI, au participat cca 30 de clerici, preoţi de mir şi monahi. Ambii Ierarhi ai Episcopiei, IPS Sa Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel, şi PS Sa Episcopul Irineu, au fost prezenţi, si au condus această sesiune.

Cea de a 2-a retragere spirituală, din 4-6 noiembrie 2004, s-a ținut pe Coasta de Vest, la Centrul de Retrageri Spirituale din cadrul mânăstirii "The Sacred Heart": 920 E. Alhambra Rd. Alhambra, California 91801; Tel. (626) 289-1353/Ext. #200.

La această retragere, care s-a desfşurat sub îndrumarea IPS Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, au participat 17 clerici, după cum urmează: P.C. Protopopi Simion Pavel (Chicago, IL), Constantin Alecse (Los Angeles, CA), P.C. Preoți (dr.) Cătălin Mitescu (Pomona, CA), Cornel Avramescu (Anaheim, CA), Andrew Lesko (Pomona, CA), Dumitru Păun (Dallas, TX), Ioan Andrișoaia (Vancouver, BC-Canada), Ioan Cătană (Seattle, WA), Constantin Lăpuştea (San Jose, CA), Eugene Roşu (Warren, OH), William John Clark (Los Angeles, CA), Cosmin Vint (Anaheim, CA), diac. Vasile £imonca (Los Angeles, CA), ipodiaconii Narcis Stoica (Pomona, CA), dr. Iosif Răzvan Bena (Los Angeles, CA) şi Liviu George Constantinescu (Los Angeles, CA).



Tema retragerii: Slujirea, în sec.al XXI-lea, a lui Iisus Hristos Cel Întrupat, Adevăratul nostru Dumnezeu și Mântuitor.

În analizarea situației slujirii Bisericii în secolul nostru, s-a pornit de la recent publicata carte "Clergy Killers" (Ucigătorii Clerului) a pastorului Luteran G. Lloyd Rediger, în care, între altele se menționează faptul că, unele din conflicte chiar și în Biserică sunt normale, însă alte conflicte sunt anormale sau abuzive. Există biserici formate din membri "ucigători de preoți", mânați la astfel de acțiuni chiar de către Satana..., amplificând întotdeauna conflictele existente împotriva personalului bisericesc.

Paragraful de mai jos (în Engleză) se dorește a sumariza "prezentarea cărții", care este considerată deja un "Best Seller".

Some conflict is normal, even in the church, but Lloyd Rediger argues that there are some conflicts which are not normal, and are in fact abusive. Some churches have "clergy killer" congregations, energized by evil and mentally ill personalities in their midst. Even the clergy may become "killer clergy" if their status or interactions encourage them to act abusively toward church staff, or to be exempt from justice.

Clergy Killers presents research to substantiate the alarming rate of abused and fired pastors. It indicates why these conflicts occur while also presenting methods for resolving them. Strategies to prevent abuse, to bring support to clergy, and to build healthier congregations are also included.

(See: http://www.forbesbookclub.com/bookpage.

asp?prod_cd=I4W0M)

În cele 3 zile de reculegere, fiecare slujitor a avut posibilitatea să se prezinte personal, să vorbească despre realizările sale, înfăptuite în viața lui preoțească, și să descrie realizările înfăptuite de misiunile și parohiile slujite, în timpul pastorației sale.

S-au discutat probleme legate de administrația bisericească, și relațiile normale care ar trebui să existe întotdeauna între preoți și mireni, dimpreună

chivernisitori ai Bisericii lui Hristos.

Doi dintre frații co-slujitori (PC Părinți Andrew Lesko, și Bill Clark), care au poziții aparte în slujirea lor preoțească, au fost invitați, și au împărtșit cu toți participanții, experiența lor în slujirea Bisericii lui Hristos "misionarism ortodox la americani". S-au discutat oportunitățile ce ni le oferă societatea de azi de a face cunoscută Ortodoxia în lumea americană (chemarea la "misiune și evanghelizare").

Părintele Andrew Lesko a împărtșit cu frații participanți la această retragere, experiența sa de aproape 2 săptămâni de asistență a sutelor de Californieni afectați de focurile recente din California. Prin însăși prezența, și implicația sa personală în asistarea celor afectați (sinistrați), s-a făcut cunoscut faptul că "Ortodoxia este religia slujirii aproapelui".

Tot Părintele Andrew a vorbit și despre o altă formă de slujire a lui Hristos în lumea americană: în calitate

de capelan în "Departamentul Sheriff-ilor" din San Bernandino, părintele servește și în calitatea de îndrumător, și sfătuitor al celor ce au probleme legale cu autoritățile, de aplicare a legilor în conduita cotidiană a societății.

S-au discutat de asemenea subiecte legate de acțiunile pan-ortodoxe, și s-a solicitat o mai adâncă implicare din partea clerului Eposcopiei ROEA în astfel de acțiuni. IPS Sa Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a făcut o succintă prezentare a vieții spirituale și social-administrative a parohiilor și misiunilor Episcopiei ce o conduce. De asemenea, a elaborat asupra rolului Episcopiei ROEA în promovarea înfăptuirii unității Ortodoxiei pe Continent American, cu o înfăptuire - atunci când Domnul va voi - a unui Patriarhat Ortodox în America. S-a făcut referire și la activitatea susținută a grupului OCL la împlinirea acestui deziderat.

Un aspect al discuţiilor a fost şi acela al relaţiilor dintre cele 2 Episcopii româneşti de pe Continentul American. S-a subliniat faptul că, multe s-au împlinit din 1989 şi până în present în dialogul bi-lateral al comisiei mixte a celor 2 dioceze, însă mai există obstacole şi clarificări de poziţii până a se ajunge la

refacerea totală a unității celor 2 Episcopii.

În cele 3 zile de contemplație duhovnicească, s-a slujit serviciul divin al Vecerniei în zilele de marți şi miercuri seara, şi Arhiereasca Liturghie, joi dimineața (6 noiembrie). Părintele Simion Pavel a deservit drept duhovnicul retragerii, majoritatea participanților având posibilitatea să se spovedească pe îndelete, şi să trăiasca momente de introspecție şi înaltă simțire duhovnicească.

În fiecare zi măicuțele mânăstirii (vreo 30 la număr), au fost gazde ospitaliere și primitoare, pregătind și servindu-ne mese copioase, inclusiv mâncare de post în ziua de miercuri. Mai mult chiar, într-una din seri, întregul sobor monahicesc ne-a copleșit cu 2 cântări religioase, de inspirație divină și meditație duhovnicească, iar noi, musafirii, am raspuns antifonic cu axionul "Cuvine-se cu adevărat", în limba Română și Engleză.

În încheierea retragerii spirituale din Sudul Californiei, s-a recomandat ca anul viitor (2004), să aibă loc o singură retragere spirituală, tot în Sudul Californiei, tot la această mânăstire, și tot în luna Noiembrie, cu invitația frățească, către toți clericii Episcopiei ROEA, să facă sacrificiile de a participa.

SLUJIRE ARHIEREASCĂ LA BISERICA "SFÂNTA MARIA" DIN ANAHEIM, CA

A doua zi după încheierea retragerii spirituale a preoțimii ROEA în Sudul Californiei, Sâmbătă 8 noiembrie 2003, prăznuindu-se Soborul Sfinților Arhangheli Mihail și Gavriil, IPS Sa Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a celebrat Arhiereasca Liturghie la Biserica Ortodoxă "Sfânta Marie" din Anaheim, CA, păstorită de către PC Părinte Cornel Avramescu.

Serviciul divin a fost înălțător, iar participanții, deși în "zi de lucru" au umplut Sfânta Biserică. Un

Cont. la pag. 20

Retragerea Spirituală ...

Cont. de la pag. 19 raport detaliat asupra evenimentului sărbătorit îl puteți afla în buletinul parohiei "Sfânta Marie", Anaheim, CA.

POMENIRE ÎN MEMORIA LUI MIHAI PATRICHI (FONDATORUL FUNDAȚIEI "MOLDOVIȚA")

Tot sâmbătă 8 noiembrie, din încredințarea IPS Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, și la invitația dnei Rodica Patrichi, Părintele Constantin Alecse a oficiat, la mormântul răposatului Mihai Patrichi, din Cimitirul "Hollywood For Ever", Hollywood, o slujbă de pomenire, la ziua numelui fondatorului "Moldoviței" din Sudul Californiei.

Dumnezeu să-l ierte, și să-l odihnească în corturile drepților!

IPS ARHIEPISCOPUL NATHANIEL A LITURGHISIT LA "SFÂNTA TREIME" ÎN LOS ANGELES, CA

Duminică 9 noiembrie, 2003, aflându-se încă în Sudul Californiei, IPS Sa Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a săvârşit Sfânta Liturghie în Biserica "Sfânta Treime" din Los Angeles, California. Biserica a fost plină de credincioși. IPS Sa a fost asistat de clericii parohiei: Părintele Constantin Alecse, paroh, Părintele Bill Clark, Capelan, Părintele Diacon Vasile Şimonca; răspunsurile liturgice fiind date de către ipodiaconii Răzvan Bena, Irinel Dumitrașcu și Liviu Constantinescu.

La sfărșitul serviciului divin, părintele paroh a făcut o prezentare generală a situației bisericii, cu o scurtă incursiune în istoria acestei parohii, de la fondare acum 65 de ani, și până în prezent. A vorbit mai în detaliu despre situația, la zi, a noului proiect de construcție, ce urmează a fi împlinit în Sunland, CA.

A fost invitat apoi Arhitectul Garo Minassian să facă o prezentare a planurilor finale ale proiectului de construcție. Arhitectul Minassian lucrează în strânsă cooperare cu Arhitecta Michelle Ertzan (prezentă la toate ședințele comitetului de construcție, precum și la acestă prezentare), pentru asigurarea încorporării în planurile bisericii a elementelor esențiale ale mânăstirii Moldovița.

Domnul arhitect a prezentat, și explicat fiecare schematică în parte: Planul General (Plot Plan), Planul Bisericii, Planul Sălii Parohiale, Planul clădirilor administrative, și în perspectivă, Plan General al clădirii desemnate drept "Clădirea apartamentelor pentru pensionati".

Prezentarea Arhitectului Garo Minassian, asupra costisitorului proiect de construcție (ce se va desfşura în 2 faze), s-a bucurat de aprecieri positive din partea credincioşilor participanți la Sfânta Slujbă.

La finele serviciului divin, și a prezentării arhitecturale, a vorbit, în limba română, cu mult patos, Înalt Prea Sfințitul Arhiepiscop. Vlădica Nathaniel și-

a exprimat satisfacția, și mulțumirea părintească, să constate că, după mai bine de 10 ani de stagnare, proiectul de construcție al noii biserici "Sfânta Treime" este reînvigorat, făcând progrese considerabile în ultimele 6 luni. A mulțumit membrilor parohiei, auxiliarelor bisericii, comitetului de construcție, arhitecților, și celorlalți specialiști, voluntari sau angajați, care lucrează la înfăptuirea acestui proiect.

IPS Sa a făcut apoi un călduros apel, către toți enoriașii, donatorii și sprijinitorii parohiei "Sfânta Treime" ca să sprijine eforturile părintelui paroh, și ale comitetului de construcție, în acest urcuș anevoios de a construi Domnului un Nou Sfânt Locaș. Înaltul Prelat a binecuvântat apoi, și a îndemnat întreaga comunitate ortodoxă Româno-Americană din Sudul Californiei să fie generoasă; să facă donații cu multă mărinimie, și să nu uite, în testamentele lor, să menționeze și numele Bisericii Sfânta Treime.

După cuvântul de suflet al Înaltului nostru Arhipăstor, părintele paroh a binecuvântat, prin stropire cu aghiazmă, pe toți credincioșii participanți la Slujbă, și la prezentarea arhitecturală.

Pentru imortalizarea evenimentului, un grup de participanți s-au fotografiat în curtea bisericii, alături de Întâi Stătătorul Episcopiei ROEA, de la Vatra Românească.

Notă: Menționam faptul că, oficiul parohial a expediat tuturor membrilor parohiei o scrisoare informativă asupra prezentării arhitecturale din ziua de 9 noiembrie 2003, iar IPS Sa Arhiepiscopul Nathaniel a primit un "set complet" al acestor planuri, spre a le analiza şi discuta cu membrii consiliului episcopesc, autoritatea finală ce va aproba aceste planuri înainte de a fi depuse pentru aprobare la Primăria Los Angeles-ului.

Pr. Protopop Constantin Alecse



PS Irineu a Sărbătorit Nașterea Domnului 2003 în Parohia "Nașterea Domnului" din Chicago

Din încredințarea ÎPS Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, Prea Sfințitul Episcop Irineu a sărbătorit Marele Praznic al Nașterii Domnului la Parohia închinată acestei mari sărbători "Nașterea Domnului". A ajuns în Chicago în ajunul Crăciunului însoțit de Părintele Ierod. Sebastian Dumitrașcu și de Corala Teofania de la Facultatea de Teologie Andrei Şaguna din Sibiu. Prea Sfințitul Irineu a adus vestea cea bună a Nașterii Mântuitorului la casa P.C. Părinte Protopop Simion Pavel care 1-a întâmpinat cu multă căldură și ospitalitate.

După vecernia din ajun, pe care Prea Sfinția Sa a săvârşit-o împreună cu P.C.Părinți Simion Pavel, Ioan Lupescu, Nicolae Izbaşa şi ierodiaconul Sebastian Dumitraşcu, răspunsurile fiind date de către corul de studenți veniți de la Sibiu, Prea Sfinția Sa a rostit un cuvânt de bun găsit credincioşilor de la Biserica Nașterii Domnului din Chicago explicându-le celor prezenți însemnătatea acestei mari sărbători creştine. După vecernie, Vlădica Irineu şi însoțitorii au plecat la mai multe case românești unde s-au colindat colinde tradiționale şi s-au făcut alese urări cu ocazia Sf. Sărbători, întreținându-se cu mulți credincioşi veniți din țara Făgăraşului, unde Prea Sfințitul a fost Stareț, la măreața Mănăstire Brâncoveanu de la Sâmbăta de Sus.

În ziua Marelui Praznic Prea Sfinția Sa, a săvârșit

Sf. Liturghie Arhierească, încojurat de preoții parohiei și un număr de peste 500 de credincioși români veniți să întâmpine cu multă bucurie pe Prea Sfințitul Irineu și să se bucure de această Sfântă Sărbătoare.

La priceasnă P.C. Părinte Protopop Simion Pavel, a citit Pastorala îndătinată trimisă de ÎPS Arhiepiscop Nathaniel. Sfânta Liturghie s-a încheiat cu un cuvânt de învățătură a P.S. Irineu. În continuare, a avut loc un concert de colinde deosebit de înălțător susținut de corala TEOFANIA a tinerilor proaspăt licențiați ai Facultății de Teologie Andrei Şaguna din Sibiu, urmată de sceneta Nașterii Domnului interpretată de copiii de la Școala duminicală a parohiei.

Ca semn de preţuire pentru activitatea rodnică în parohie, P.S. Irineu, a acordat celor trei preoţi Simion Pavel, Ioan Lupescu şi Nicolae Izbaşa, cea mai înaltă distincţie bisericească "purtători de cruce" iar doamnelor Preotese câte o icoană a Maicii Domnului tot ca semn de preţuire pentru sprijinul acordat în munca pastorală a soţilor şi pentru activitatea lor în parohie. În încheiere, Prea Sfinţitul Irineu a împărţit iconiţe şi a urat sărbători fericite tuturor credincioşilor prezenţi la sfânta biserică. A urmat o agapă creştinească oferită de familia Părintelui Protopop Simion Pavel.

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Poezia Regăsirii Noastre



Poetul Pr. Dumitru Ichim

O zi frumoasă de sfârşit de toamnă într-un oraș de la malul oceanului Pacific, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: 29 Noiembrie 2003. Au trecut 85 de ani de la înfăptuirea visului de veacuri al Românilor de pretutindeni: Marea Unire într-o singura țară - România. Centrul Comunitar Românesc din British Columbia a organizat a III-a ediție a Festivalului

Românesc dedicat Zilei Naționale a României, festival ce ar merita din plin o relatare detaliată.

Printre invitaţi s-a aflat preotul şi poetul Dumitru Ichim care, în prezenţa Ambasadorului României în Canada Liviu Maior, reprezentantului Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Lilian Zamfiroiu, a altor personalităţi şi a unui numeros public, şi-a lansat cu acest prilej cel de-al 11-lea volum de poezii: "Floarea Fântânilor Pierdute". Vă prezentăm cuvântul oferit publicului la această lansare,cuvânt care surprinde poate cel mai bine impactul acestei poezii asupra celor ce o descoperă sau o redescoperă.

"Luaţi de vârtejul vieţii, de multe ori, nu reuşim să surprindem pe retina memoriei noastre decât imagini fotografice, imagini ce aparţin clipelor noastre de bucurie sau de tristeţe. Avem astăzi printre noi un om ce a fost hărăzit să lucreze pentru şi cu sufletul semenului. Nu s-a rezumat numai la a-şi îndeplini menirea de preot, de tata, de soţ, pentru că, dotat cu un simţ al descifrării adâncimilor sufleteşti, a căutat şi reuşit să scoată la lumină, prin poezie, acea fotografie a sufletului care, odată "developată" ne face să tresărim şi să ne înfiorăm. De ce? Pentru că niciodată nu am crezut că poate fi atât de uşor să îndepărtăm acea ceaţă aşezată peste amintiri şi care de multe ori ne împiedică a vedea cu adevărat ce şi cum a fost.

E surprinzătoare și totodată încântătoare aceasta putere a poeziei poetului DUMITRU ICHIM, de a pătrunde și de a dezvălui depozitul de perle al memoriei noastre sufleteşti. Reuşim, citind poezia lui DUMITRU ICHIM, să găsim sau să regăsim gândurile pe care leam avut sau cuvintele pe care am vrea să le dăruim prietenului, iubitei, soției, copilului; reușim să găsim răspunsuri sau poate, câteodată, definiții, la ce a însemnat sau înseamnă pentru fiecare dintre noi clipa, cu fericirea sau cu durerea ei. E mult, e puțin? Răspunsul depinde de gradul de sensibilitate al fiecăruia dintre noi și nu numai; depinde de cum am înțeles să trăim viața ce ne-a fost dăruită și nu numai; depinde de ce și cum am folosit talantul ce ne-a fost dat, pentru a zidi cetatea personalității noastre; depinde, poate, de fiorul dragostei dintâi sau a primului zâmbet oferit de copilul nostru; depinde, poate, de fiorul primei rugăciuni.

Citind poezia ce ne este astăzi dedicată, ne vom da poate un răspuns sau vom începe un drum al căutărilor frumosului din sufletul nostru și din sufletul celor ce ne sunt alături, la capătul căruia poate vom găsi "Floarea Fântânilor Pierdute".

În prag de sărbători, haideţi să ne dăruim nouă înşine şi celor dragi, poezia creată cu credinţă, sensibilitate şi cu multă dăruire de poetul Preot DUMITRU ICHIM."

Dumitru Ichim s-a născut la 14 August 1944, în comuna Dărmăneşti, judeţul Bacău. A urmat Seminarul Teologic de la Mânăstirea Neamţu (1959-1964). Este licenţiat al Institutului Teologic din Bucureşti (1968) şi doctor în teologie cu teza "The Orthodox Liturgy and the World" (1973). În 1974 se stabileşte în Canada, iar din 1978 este preot paroh la Biserica "Sfântul Ioan Botezatorul" din Kitchener, Ontario (Canada). A debutat editorial cu volumul de poezii "De unde începe omul" (1970), iar penultimul volum apărut este "Cerşetorul porților de rouă" (2001).

Preot Ioan Andrisoaia

O Nouă Carte a Arhiepiscopului Valerian D. Trifa

La sfârşitul anului 2003 a văzut lumina tiparului o nouă carte scrisă de către Arhiepiscopul Valerian D. Trifa

Viorel D. Trifă, "Memorii," (Editura Limes, Cluj-Napoca, România, 174 de pagini).

Lucrarea reproduce textul (a cărei copie, după original, este păstrată în arhiva "Centrului de Studii şi Documentare") terminat în 1986 în Estoril, Portugalia, de către Arhiepiscopul Valerian şi încredinţat, spre transmitere întru păstrare în Arhiva Centrului, lui Dinu Negru.

Cartea cuprinde memoriile Arhiepiscopului Valerian din anii 1941-1944. Este un text scris cu sinceritate, într-un stil laconic și convingător.

Este meritul lui Eugene S. Raica de a fi luat asupra lui truda editării, spre publicare, a textului rămas de la Arhiepiscopul Valerian și de a fi făcut cu putință publicarea lui în România.

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Alexandru Nemojanu

Educarea Creștină a Familiei

Sfântul Mucenic Policarp, Episcopul Smirnei

Sfântul Policarp s-a născut în cetatea Efesului, părinții lui, Pangratie și Teodora, fiind buni creștini. Marcion, stăpânul cetății, i-a pus pe părinții lui în închisoare și i-a chinuit cerându-le să renunțe la creștinism. Când Sfântul Policarp s-a născut în închisoare, îngerul Domnului l-a luat și l-a dus unei văduve bogate, numită Calistra, să-l crească după învățătura creștină. Marcion, furios că părintii nu vor să-i spună unde este copilul și nu vor să renunțe la creștinism a ordonat să li se taie capetele.

Sfântul Policarp a fost botezat și i s-a dat numele de Pangratie după numele tatălui său. Când a crescut, a fost dat la scoală și a căpătat repede virtutile crestine. în special dragostea pentru săraci. Având o inimă foarte bună, a dat nevoiașilor din hambarele mamei sale până când acestea s-au golit. Mama sa adoptivă, mergând şi văzând hambarele goale s-a întristat. Sfântul Policarp i-a spus să meargă împreună să se uite la hambare, dar dânsa nu vroia stiind că sunt goale. Atunci Sfântul s-a dus singur și a făcut rugăciune către Dumnezeu, și, o minune! îndată s-au umplut toate hambarele de toate felurile de roade și, chemând pe maică-sa, cu bucurie a zis ei: "Vino, Doamna mea, la hambare ca să vezi puterea și darul lui Dumnezeu." Venind femeia și văzând hambarele pline de roade și încă și toate chiupurile (vasele) pline cu untdelemn și vin, a preamărit cu glas mare pe Dumnezeu, Marele dăruitor. După aceea, sărutând pe fericitul Pangratie, a zis: "Fiul meu prea iubit, de astăzi înainte dă cât voiesti săracilor. De acum nu voi să te numesc Pangratie, ci Policarp." (policarp înseamnă "roadă multă"). Fericitul Policarp avînd libertate, împărțea cu îndestulare săracilor roadele și cu dumnezeiască milă hambarele nu se goleau, nici nu se împuținau vreodată, căci Dumnezeu, văzând socoteala cea bună a sfântului, le înmultea" (Viețile Sfinților).

La 20 de ani, cu permisiunea mamei adoptive s-a dus ca, împreună cu Sfântul Ignatie şi Sfântul Vucol să-l ajute pe Sfântul Ioan Evanghelistul în propovăduirea Evangheliei, ducând o viață aspră, umblând din loc în loc, trecând prin multe încercări şi suferind multe neajunsuri. Când Sfântul Ioan, la porunca împăratului Romei Domițian, a fost surghiunit în insula Patmos, Sfântul Policarp, împreună cu Sfântul Vucol s-au dus în Smirna unde a fost hirotonit preot şi pus în dregătoria

îngrijirii de săraci.

După moartea Sfântului Vucol, Sfântul Policarp a fost sfințit episcop, "...începând sfințirea, a strălucit o lumină dumnezeiască peste toți din biserică și unii din cei vrednici au văzut un porumbel alb, strălucind ca fulgerul și zburând împrejurul capului Sfântului Policarp. Alții vedeau pe Sfântul Policarp îmbrăcat ostășește și încins cu brâu ostășesc, înarmat ca la război. Altora li se părea îmbrăcat cu porfira

împărătească și cu fața strălucind. O femeie l-a văzut mai înalt cu statura, îndoit de cât era și cu veșmintele lui înroșite pe umărul drept. Când Sfântul Policarp șia plecat genunchii la sfințire, a văzut înaintea sa picioarele Domnului Hristos, care stătea nevăzut acolo la sfințirea lui." Sfântul Policarp a făcut multe minuni și iată una dintre ele: "...într-o noapte, pe când toți dormeau, s-a aprins foarte rău cetatea Smirna și ardea o bună parte a orașului. Atunci era gâlceavă mare, plângere și frică și strigare și poporul se ostenea să stingă focul, dar nu putea să oprească nimic, focul luând mai multă putere. Adunându-se iudeii cei ce farmecă focul și aceia au rămas deșerți. Aducându-și aminte stăpânitorul de Sfântul Policarp, a zis către învățătorii curții și sfetnicilor săi: "Nimeni nu va putea să stingă focul acesta decât numai învătătorul crestinilor. Policarp, care nu de mult a tămăduit pe robul meu de îndrăcire." Şi trimitându-i, 1-a chemat și 1-a rugat să ajute cetății în primeidia aceea. Sfântul, ridicându-si înaintea lor mâinile sfinte, spre cer, a făcut rugăciunile sale către Hristos Dumnezeu și îndată focul s-a stins, ca și cum ar fi fost ape multe și arderea a încetat."

Sfântul Policarp a murit ca martir în anul 143. Pomenirea lui se face pe data de 23 Februarie a fiecărui

an.

Întrebări pentru părinți:

— Înţelegem noi cât de mult L-a iubit Teodora, mama Sfântului Policarp, pe Dumnezeu dacă, gravidă fiind, a suportat bătăi şi chinuri fără să se lepede de creştinism? Avem noi întotdeauna curajul să spunem că suntem creştini, sau uneori ne jenăm de credinţa noastră în faţa colegilor de lucru, în faţa prietenilor, în faţa sectarilor? Nu cumva, pentru "a nu jigni sentimentele altora" scoatem de la gât crucea şi în loc să ne spunem unii altora "Crăciun fericit!" sau "Hristos a înviat" o facem pe modernii şi îi trântim un "Happy Holydays"?

Nu cumva, atunci când copiii noştri citindu-l pe Schopenhauer, Sartre sau Camus vin cu nişte idei aşa zise "moderne", noi, de frică să nu fim considerați proşti, nu avem curajul să apărăm valorile creştine, renunțăm să le mai spunem să vină la biserică, şi chiar nici nu mai îndrăznim să le spunem că, uite, este Postul Crăciunului sau Postul Paştelui şi e bine să meargă şi ei la biserică să se spovedească şi să se împărtşească şi ei ca toți creştinii din lume? Cât timp trăim nu este prea târziu. Dacă părinții Sfântului Policarp şi-au mărturisit credința în vremuri atât de grele, putem şi noi să încercăm să fim creştini adevărați salvând sufletele noastre si ale copiilor noştri.

 Nu cumva i-am certat pe copiii noştri atunci când au împărţit "lunch"-ul (mâncarea pe care o iau

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Educarea Creștină ...

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copiii cu ei la școală) cu alți copii? O fetiță îmi povestea că, odată, într-o pauză de prânz a dat biscuitele ei unui coleg sărac și acesta, în loc să-l mănânce l-a pus în ghiozdan. "De ce nu-l mănânci?" 1-a întrebat fetița. "Îl iau acasă să-l împart cu surioara mea mai mică" a răspuns copilul sărac. Am rămas uimită: câte bogății spirituale se află în sufletele acestor copii! Nu cumva noi le stricăm sufletele încercând să-i facem egoiști și nesimțitori la durerile aproapelui? Nu am văzut un singur om care să fi rămas sărac pentru că a dat nevoiașilor. Sărăcia și nefericirea nu vin de la ajutarea aproapelui ci de la lipsa de cumpătare în mâncare, lux exagerat, invidia că vecinul are mai mult decât noi și nu putem dormi până nu-l întrecem.

Nu cumva, atunci când trecem printr-un necaz mare uităm să cerem ajutorul lui Dumnezeu? Focul din cetatea Smirna nu s-a stins decât atunci când Sfântul Policarp s-a rugat lui Dumnezeu. Ați observat, atunci când ard pădurile, la televizor se spune că numai "Mother Nature" (Mama Natură) poate să ajute dând ploaie. Aceasta este cea mai mare bătaie de joc și metodă de spălare a creierului pentru tinerele generații pentru ca aceștia să nu-și mai pună speranța în Dumnezeu ci în "Mother Nature" care, toată lumea știe, puțin îi pasă de oameni, deci tânarul este complect părăsit pe această planetă și dacă nu-i place are tot dreptul și libertate să se sinucidă aceasta fiind ultima lui scăpare. Am încercat noi să-i explicăm copilului că ploaia și tot ajutorul nostru vin de la Dumnezeu și nu de la o noțiune abstractă? Am încercat să-i explicăm deosebirea dintre Dumnezeu și așa numita "Mother Nature" una din cele mai diabolice invenții ale vremii noastre? Trăim vremuri grele, dar cerând ajutorul lui Dumnezeu ne vom putea salva sufletele noastre și ale copiiilor noștri.

Maica Preoteasă

Cuvânt de Suflet

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nici păcate personale (Ioan VIII, 6), după cum nu avea trebuință nici de o mai mare revărsare a Duhului Sfânt asupra sa, ceea ce de altfel botezul lui Ioan nu I-o

putea oferi."

S-a petrecut "Arătarea" cea dumnezeiască spre îndemnul nostru, dar mai putem zice și spre folosul nostru: cufundată sub unda Iordanului, s-a sfințit firea apelor celor neînsuflețite; iar prin circuitul pe care îl face apa în natură, a sfințit întreagă casa noastră cea pământească, de unde și obiceiul necesar al "sfeștaniei", iar la acest Praznic Sfințirea cea Mare a apei - foarte folositoare prin stropirea caselor și gustarea evlavioasă spre curățire sufletească și trupească.

Așadar și acest al treilea rând de prăznuire este de

importanță majoră, sărbătorind Arătarea la Iordan a Mântuitorului lumii și, totodată, a Prea Sfintei Treimi. (Tocmai de aceea Biserica a trecut de la sărbătorirea împreună a Nașterii și Epifaniei, la sărbătorire separată.) Este și motiv pentru a ne strădui să petrecem toate aceste sărbători cu bună rânduială, gândindu-ne și la un alt cuvânt al Înaintemergătorului Domnului din vreme pregătitoare de Praznic: "Acum securea stă la rădăcina pomilor și tot pomul care nu face roadă bună se taie si se aruncă în foc." (Matei III, 10). Să ne mai bucurăm de prezența Pruncului de 8 zile la sânul Bisericii, împreună cu prea plăcutul Sfânt Părinte, Vasile cel cu nume Mare, să fim cât mai prezenți duhovnicește la apa vestitului Iordan, multumind prin acestea Bunului Dumnezeu Care toate le plinește "pentru noi oamenii și pentru a noastră mântuire".

+ Irineu, Episcop Vicar

PS Irineu a Sărbătorit ...

Cont. de la pag. 21

În după amiaza aceleiași zile de mare praznic, P.S. Irineu a făcut o vizită frățească ÎPS Arhiepiscop Nicolae Condrea, vizitând și noul Centru al Arhiepiscopiei Ortodoxe Române din America și Canada cu reședința la Chicago. După un scurt concert de colinde susținut de studenții teologi, cei doi Ierarhi s-au întreținut la discuții, bucurându-se de lumina Praznicului Nașterii Domnului.

Deși foarte târziu, P.S. Irineu a răspuns invitației Domnului Consul Ilie Puşcaş, onorând cu prezența sa familia Domnului Consul de Sărbătoarea Crăciunului. La ceas târziu din noapte, multumind lui Dumnezeu si tuturor celor care l-au primit cu inimă bună de români, P.S. Irineu s-a îndreptat spre reședința de la Vatra Românească, unde a doua zi a slujit Sf. Liturghie.

Participant

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